PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 428 (Part 2)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2004–05

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Chronology of The Parliamentary Debates

The Parliamentary History contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almons Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c. &c.

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House of Commons

Alphabetical List of Members

[Returned at the General Election, 7 June 2001]

A

Abbott, Diane Julie (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington)
Adams, Gerry (Belfast, West)
Adams, Katherine (Paisley, North)
Ainger, Nicholas Richard (West Carmarthen and South Pembrokeshire)
Ainsworth, Peter Michael (East Surrey)
Ainsworth, Robert William (Coventry, North East)
Alexander, Douglas (Paisley, South)
Allan, Richard Beecroft (Sheffield, Hallam)
Allen, Graham William (Nottingham, North)
Amess, David Anthony Andrew (Southend, West)
Ancram, Rt. Hon. Michael Andrew (Devizes)
Anderson, Rt. Hon. Donald (Swansea, East)
Anderson, Janet (Rossendale and Darwen)
Arbuthnot, Rt. Hon. James Norwich (North-East Hampshire)
Armstrong, Rt. Hon. Hilary Jane (North-West Durham)
Atherton, Candice Kathleen (Falmouth and Camborne)
Atkins, Charlotte (Staffordshire, Moorlands)
Atkinson, David Anthony (Bournemouth, East)
Atkinson, Peter Landreth (Hexham)
Austin, John Eric (Erith and Thamesmead)

B

Bacon, Richard Michael (South Norfolk)
Bailey, Adrian Edward (West Bromwich, West)
Baird, Vera (Redcar)
Baker, Norman John (Lewes)
Baldry, Antony Brian (Banbury)
Banks, Anthony Louis (West Ham)
Barker, Gregory Leonard George (Bexhill and Battle)
Barnes, Harold (North-East Derbyshire)
Baron, John Charles (Billericay)
Barrett, John Andrew (Edinburgh, West)
Barron, Kevin John (Rother Valley)
Battle, John (Leeds, West)
Bayley, Hugh (City of York)
Beard, Christopher Nigel (Bexleyheath and Crayford)
Beckett, Rt. Hon. Margaret Mary (Derby, South)
Begg, Anne (Aberdeen, South)
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)
Beith, Rt. Hon. Alan James (Berwick-upon-Tweed)
Bell, Stuart (Middlesbrough)
Bellingham, Henry Campbell (North-West Norfolk)
Benn, Hilary James (Leeds, Central)
Bennett, Andrew Francis (Denton and Reddish)
Benton, Joseph Edward (Bootle)
Bercow, John Simon (Buckingham)
Beresford, Sir Paul Alexander (Mole Valley)
Berry, Roger Leslie (Kingswood)
Best, Harold (Leeds, North-West)
Betts, Clive James Charles (Sheffield, Attercliffe)
Blackman, Elizabeth Marion (Erewash)
Blair, Rt. Hon. Anthony Charles Lynton (Sedgefield)
Blears, Hazel Anne (Salford)
Blizzard, Bob (Waveney)
Blunkett, Rt. Hon. David (Sheffield, Brightside)
Blunt, Crispin Jeremy Rupert (Reigate)
Boateng, Rt. Hon. Paul Yaw (Brent, South)
Borrow, David Stanley (South Ribble)
Boswell, Timothy Eric (Daventry)
Bottomley, Peter James (Worthing, West)
Bottomley, Rt. Hon. Virginia Hilda Brunette Maxwell (South-West Surrey)
Bradley, Rt. Hon. Keith John Charles (Manchester, Withington)
Bradley, Peter Charles Stephen (The Wrekin)
Bradshaw, Benjamin Peter James (Exeter)
Brady, Graham Stuart (Altrincham and Sale, West)
Brake, Thomas Anthony (Carshalton and Wallington)
Brazier, Julian William Hendy (Canterbury)
Breed, Colin Edward (South-East Cornwall)
Brennan, Kevin Denis (Cardiff, West)
Brinton, Helen Rosemary (Peterborough)
Brooke, Annette Lesley (Mid-Dorset and North Poole)
Brown, Rt. Hon. James Gordon (Dunfermline, East)
Brown, Rt. Hon. Nicholas Hugh (Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend)
Brown, Russell Leslie (Dumfries)
Browne, Desmond Henry (Kilmarnock and Loudoun)
Browning, Angela Frances (Tiverton and Honiton)
Bruce, Malcolm Gray (Gordon)
Bryant, Christopher John (Rhondda)
Buck, Karen Patricia (Regent's Park and Kensington, North)
Burden, Richard Haines (Birmingham, Northfield)
Burgon, Colin (Elmet)
Burnett, John Patrick (Torridge and West Devon)
Burnham, Andrew Murray (Leigh)
Burns, Simon Hugh McGuigan (West Chelmsford)
Burnside, David Wilson Boyd (South Antrim)
Burstow, Paul Kenneth (Sutton and Cheam)
Burt, Alistair James Hendrie (North-East Bedfordshire)
Butterfill, John Valentine (Bournemouth, West)
Byers, Rt. Hon. Stephen John (Tyneside, North)
Byrne, Liam (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) [*By-election, July 2004*]

C

Cable, John Vincent (Twickenham)
Caborn, Rt. Hon. Richard George (Sheffield, Central)
Cairns, John David (Greenock and Inverclyde)
Calton, Patsy (Cheadle)
Cameron, David William Donald (Witney)
Campbell, Alan (Tynemouth)
Campbell, Anne (Cambridge)
Campbell, Gregory Lloyd (East Londonderry)
Campbell, Ronald (Blyth Valley)
Campbell, Rt. Hon. Walter Menzies (North-East Fife)
Cann, Jamie Charles (Ipswich) [*Died, October 2001*]
Caplin, Ivor Keith (Hove)
Carmichael, Alexander Morrison (Orkney and Shetland)
Casale, Roger Mark (Wimbledon)
Cash, William Nigel Paul (Stone)
Caton, Martin Philip (Gower)
Cawsey, Ian Arthur (Brigg and Goole)
Challen, Colin Robert (Morley and Rothwell)
Chapman, James Keith (Wirral, South)

Chapman, Sir Sydney Brooks (Chipping Barnet)
Chaytor, David Michael (Bury, North)
Chidgey, David William George (Eastleigh)
Chope, Christopher Robert (Christchurch)
Clapham, Michael (Barnsley, West and Penistone)
Clappison, William James (Hertsmere)
Clark, Lynda Margaret (Edinburgh, Pentlands)
Clark, Paul Gordon (Gillingham)
Clarke, Anthony Richard (Northampton, South)
Clarke, Charles Rodway (Norwich, South)
Clarke, Rt. Hon. Kenneth Harry (Rushcliffe)
Clarke, Rt. Hon. Thomas (Coatbridge and Chryston)
Clelland, David Gordon (Tyne Bridge)
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey (Cotswold)
Clwyd, Ann (Cynon Valley)
Coaker, Vernon Rodney (Gedling)
Coffey, Ann (Stockport)
Cohen, Harry Michael (Leyton and Wanstead)
Coleman, Iain (Hammersmith and Fulham)
Collins, Timothy William George (Westmorland and Lonsdale)
Colman, Anthony John (Putney)
Connarty, Michael (Falkirk, East)
Conway, Derek Leslie (Old Bexley and Sidcup)
Cook, Francis (Stockton, North)
Cook, Rt. Hon. Robert (Livingston)
Cooper, Yvette (Pontefract and Castleford)
Corbyn, Jeremy Bernard (Islington, North)
Cormack, Sir Patrick Thomas (South Staffordshire)
Corston, Rt. Hon. Jean Ann (Bristol, East)
Cotter, Brian Joseph (Weston-Super-Mare)
Cousins, James Mackay (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central)
Cox, Thomas Michael (Tooting)
Cran, James Douglas (Beverley and Holderness)
Cranston, Ross Frederick (Dudley, North)
Crausby, David Anthony (Bolton, North-East)
Cruddas, Jonathan (Dagenham)
Cryer, Constance Ann (Keighley)
Cryer, John Robert (Hornchurch)
Cummings, John Scott (Easington)
Cunningham, James Dolan (Coventry, South)
Cunningham, Rt. Hon. John Anderson (Copeland)
Cunningham, Thomas Anthony (Workington)
Curry, Rt. Hon. David Maurice (Skipton and Ripon)
Curtis-Thomas, Claire (Crosby)

D

Daisley, Paul Andrew (Brent, East) [*Died, June 2003*]
Dalyell, Tam (Linlithgow)
Darling, Rt. Hon. Alistair Maclean (Edinburgh, Central)
Davey, Edward Jonathon (Kingston and Surbiton)
Davey, Valerie (Bristol, West)
David, Wayne (Caerphilly)
Davidson, Ian Graham (Glasgow, Pollok)
Davies, Rt. Hon. David John Denzil (Llanelli)
Davies, Geraint Richard (Croydon, Central)
Davies, John Quentin (Grantham and Stamford)
Davis, Rt. Hon. David Michael (Haltemprice and Howden)
Davis, Rt. Hon. Terry (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) [*Resigned, June 2004*]
Dawson, Thomas Hilton (Lancaster and Wyre)
Dean, Janet Elizabeth Ann (Burton)
Denham, Rt. Hon. John Yorke (Southampton, Itchen)
Dhanda, Parmjit Singh (Gloucester)
Dismore, Andrew Hartley (Hendon)
Djanogly, Jonathan Simon (Huntingdon)
Dobbin, James (Heywood and Middleton)
Dobson, Rt. Hon. Frank Gordon (Holborn and St. Pancras)
Dodds, Nigel Alexander (Belfast, North)
Doherty, Pat (West Tyrone)
Donaldson, Jeffrey Mark (Lagan Valley)
Donohoe, Brian Harold (Cunninghame, South)
Doran, Frank (Aberdeen, Central)
Dorrell, Rt. Hon. Stephen James (Charnwood)
Doughty, Susan Kathleen (Guildford)
Dowd, James Patrick (Lewisham, West)
Drew, David Elliott (Stroud)
Drown, Julia Kate (South Swindon)
Duncan, Alan James Carter (Rutland and Melton)
Duncan, Peter John (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale)
Duncan Smith, George Iain (Chingford and Woodford Green)
Dunwoody, Gwyneth Patricia (Crewe and Nantwich)

E

Eagle, Angela (Wallasey)
Eagle, Maria (Liverpool, Garston)
Edwards, Huw William Edmund (Monmouth)
Efford, Clive Stanley (Eltham)
Ellman, Louise (Liverpool, Riverside)
Ennis, Jeffrey (Barnsley, East and Mexborough)
Etherington, William (Sunderland, North)
Evans, Nigel Martin (Ribble Valley)
Ewing, Annabelle (Perth)

F

Fabricant, Michael Louis David (Lichfield)
Fallon, Michael Cathel (Sevenoaks)
Farrelly, Christopher Paul (Newcastle-under-Lyme)
Field, Rt. Hon. Frank (Birkenhead)
Field, Mark Christopher (Cities of London and Westminster)
Fisher, Mark (Stoke-on-Trent, Central)
Fitzpatrick, James (Poplar and Canning Town)
Fitzsimons, Lorna (Rochdale)
Flight, Howard Emerson (Arundel and South Downs)
Flint, Caroline Louise (Don Valley)
Flook, Adrian John (Taunton)
Flynn, Paul Philip (Newport, West)
Follett, Daphne Barbara (Stevenage)
Forth, Rt. Hon. Eric (Bromley and Chislehurst)
Foster, Rt. Hon. Derek (Bishop Auckland)
Foster, Donald Michael Ellison (Bath)
Foster, Michael Jabez (Hastings and Rye)
Foster, Michael John (Worcester)
Foulkes, George (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)
Fox, Liam (Woodspring)
Francis, David Hywel (Aberavon)
Francois, Mark Gino (Rayleigh)

G

Gale, Roger James (North Thanet)
Galloway, George (Glasgow, Kelvin)
Gapes, Michael John (Ilford, South)
Gardiner, Barry Strachan (Brent, North)
Garnier, Edward Henry (Harborough)
George, Andrew Henry (St. Ives)
George, Rt. Hon. Bruce Thomas (Walsall, South)
Gerrard, Neil Francis (Walthamstow)
Gibb, Nicolas John (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton)
Gibson, Ian (Norwich, North)
Gidley, Sandra Julia (Romsey)

Gildernew, Michelle (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Gill, Parmjit Singh (Leicester, South) [*By-election, July 2004*]
Gillan, Cheryl Elise Kendall (Chesham and Amersham)
Gilroy, Linda (Plymouth, Sutton)
Godsiff, Roger Duncan (Birmingham, Sparkbrook and Small Heath)
Goggins, Paul Gerard (Wythenshawe and Sale, East)
Goodman, Paul Alexander Cyril (Wycombe)
Gray, James Whiteside (North Wiltshire)
Grayling, Christopher Stephen (Epsom and Ewell)
Green, Damian Howard (Ashford)
Green, Matthew Roger (Ludlow)
Greenway, John Robert (Ryedale)
Grieve, Dominic Charles Roberts (Beaconsfield)
Griffiths, Jane Patricia (Reading, East)
Griffiths, Nigel (Edinburgh, South)
Griffiths, Winston James (Bridgend)
Grogan, John (Selby)
Gummer, Rt. Hon. John Selwyn (Suffolk, Coastal)

H

Hague, Rt. Hon. William Jefferson (Richmond, Yorks)
Hain, Peter Gerald (Neath)
Hall, Michael Thomas (Weaver Vale)
Hall, Patrick (Bedford)
Hamilton, David (Midlothian)
Hamilton, Fabian (Leeds, North-East)
Hammond, Philip (Runnymede and Weybridge)
Hancock, Michael Thomas (Portsmouth, South)
Hanson, David George (Delyn)
Harman, Rt. Hon. Harriet (Camberwell and Peckham)
Harris, Evan Leslie (Oxford, West and Abingdon)
Harris, Tom (Glasgow, Cathcart)
Harvey, Nicholas Barton (North Devon)
Haselhurst, Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Gordon Barraclough (Saffron Walden)
Havard, David Stuart (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney)
Hawkins, Nicholas John (Surrey Heath)
Hayes, John Henry (South Holland and The Deepings)
Heal, Sylvia Lloyd (Halesowen and Rowley Regis)
Heald, Oliver (North-East Hertfordshire)
Healey, John (Wentworth)
Heath, David William St. John (Somerton and Frome)
Heathcoat-Amory, Rt. Hon. David Philip (Wells)
Henderson, Douglas John (Newcastle upon Tyne, North)
Henderson, Ivan John (Harwich)
Hendrick, Mark Phillip (Preston)
Hendry, Charles (Wealden)
Hepburn, Stephen (Jarrow)
Heppell, John (Nottingham, East)
Hermon, Sylvia (North Down)
Hesford, Stephen (Wirral, West)
Hewitt, Rt. Hon. Patricia Hope (Leicester, West)
Heyes, David Alan (Ashton-under-Lyne)
Hill, Keith (Streatham)
Hinchliffe, David Martin (Wakefield)
Hoban, Mark Gerard (Fareham)
Hodge, Margaret Eve (Barking)
Hoey, Catharine Letitia (Vauxhall)
Hogg, Rt. Hon. Douglas Martin (Sleaford and North Hykeham)
Holmes, Paul Robert (Chesterfield)
Hood, James (Clydesdale)
Hoon, Rt. Hon. Geoffrey William (Ashfield)
Hope, Philip Ian (Corby)
Hopkins, Kelvin Peter (Luton, North)
Horam, John Rhodes (Orpington)
Howard, Rt. Hon. Michael (Folkestone and Hythe)
Howarth, Rt. Hon. Alan Thomas (Newport, East)
Howarth, George Edward (Knowsley, North and Sefton, East)
Howarth, James Gerald Douglas (Aldershot)
Howells, Kim Scott (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Lindsay Harvey (Chorley)
Hughes, Beverley June (Stretford and Urmston)
Hughes, Kevin Michael (Doncaster, North)
Hughes, Simon Henry Ward (Southwark, North and Bermondsey)
Humble, Jovanka Joan (Blackpool, North and Fleetwood)
Hume, John (Foyle)
Hunter, Andrew Robert Frederick (Basingstoke)
Hurst, Alan Arthur (Braintree)
Hutton, John Matthew Patrick (Barrow and Furness)

I

Iddon, Brian (Bolton, South-East)
Illsley, Eric Evlyn (Barnsley, Central)
Ingram, Rt. Hon. Adam (East Kilbride)
Irranca-Davies, Huw (Ogmore) [*By-election, February 2002*]

J

Jack, Rt. Hon. John Michael (Fylde)
Jackson, Glenda May (Hampstead and Highgate)
Jackson, Helen Margaret (Sheffield, Hillsborough)
Jackson, Robert Victor (Wantage)
Jamieson, David Charles (Plymouth, Devonport)
Jenkin, Bernard Christison (North Essex)
Jenkins, Brian David (Tamworth)
Johnson, Alan Arthur (Hull, West and Hessle)
Johnson, Alexander Boris (Henley)
Johnson, Melanie Jane (Welwyn Hatfield)
Jones, Helen Mary (Warrington, North)
Jones, Jon Owen (Cardiff, Central)
Jones, Kevan David (North Durham)
Jones, Lynne Mary (Birmingham, Selly Oak)
Jones, Martyn David (Clwyd, South)
Jones, Nigel David (Cheltenham)
Jowell, Rt. Hon. Tessa Jane (Dulwich and West Norwood)
Joyce, Eric (Falkirk, West)

K

Kaufman, Rt. Hon. Gerald Bernard (Manchester, Gorton)
Keeble, Sally Curtis (Northampton, North)
Keen, Alan (Feltham and Heston)
Keen, Ann Lloyd (Brentford and Isleworth)
Keetch, Paul Stuart (Hereford)
Kelly, Ruth Maria (Bolton, West)
Kemp, Fraser (Houghton and Washington, East)
Kennedy, Rt. Hon. Charles Peter (Ross, Skye and Inverness, West)
Kennedy, Jane Elizabeth (Liverpool, Wavertree)
Key, Robert Simon (Salisbury)
Khabra, Piara Singh (Ealing, Southall)
Kidney, David Neil (Stafford)
Kilfoyle, Peter (Liverpool, Walton)
King, Andrew (Rugby and Kenilworth)
King, Oona Tamsyn (Bethnal Green and Bow)
Kirkbride, Julie (Bromsgrove)
Kirkwood, Sir Archibald Johnstone (Roxburgh and Berwickshire)

Knight, Rt. Hon. Gregory (East Yorkshire)
Knight, Jim (South Dorset)
Kumar, Ashok (Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East)

L

Ladyman, Stephen John (South Thanet)
Laing, Eleanor Fulton (Epping Forest)
Lait, Jacqueline Anne Harkness (Beckenham)
Lamb, Norman Peter (North Norfolk)
Lammy, David Lindon (Tottenham)
Lansley, Andrew David (South Cambridgeshire)
Lawrence, Jacqueline Rita (Preseli Pembrokeshire)
Laws, David Anthony (Yeovil)
Laxton, Robert (Derby, North)
Lazarowicz, Marek Jerzy (Edinburgh, North and Leith)
Leigh, Edward Julian Egerton (Gainsborough)
Lepper, David (Brighton, Pavilion)
Leslie, Christopher Michael (Shipley)
Letwin, Oliver (West Dorset)
Levitt, Tom (High Peak)
Lewis, Ivan (Bury, South)
Lewis, Julian Murray (New Forest, East)
Lewis, Terence (Worsley)
Liddell, Rt. Hon. Helen (Airdrie and Shotts)
Liddell-Grainger, Ian Richard (Bridgwater)
Lidington, David Roy (Aylesbury)
Lilley, Rt. Hon. Peter Bruce (Hitchin and Harpenden)
Linton, Martin (Battersea)
Lloyd, Anthony Joseph (Manchester, Central)
Llwyd, Elfyn (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy)
Lord, Sir Michael Nicholson (Central Suffolk and Ipswich, North)
Loughton, Timothy Paul (East Worthing and Shoreham)
Love, Andrew (Edmonton)
Lucas, Ian Colin (Wrexham)
Luff, Peter James (Mid-Worcestershire)
Luke, Iain (Dundee, East)
Lyons, John (Strathkelvin and Bearsden)

M

McAvoy, Thomas McLaughlin (Glasgow, Rutherglen)
McCabe, Stephen James (Birmingham, Hall Green)
McCafferty, Christine (Calder Valley)
McCartney, Rt. Hon. Ian (Makerfield)
McDonagh, Siobhain Ann (Mitcham and Morden)
Macdonald, Calum Alistair (Western Isles)
McDonnell, John Martin (Hayes and Harlington)
MacDougall, John William (Central Fife)
McFall, John (Dumbarton)
McGrady, Eddie (South Down)
McGuinness, Martin (Mid-Ulster)
McGuire, Anne (Stirling)
McIntosh, Anne Caroline Ballingall (Vale of York)
McIsaac, Shona (Cleethorpes)
Mackay, Rt. Hon. Andrew James (Bracknell)
McKechin, Ann (Glasgow, Maryhill)
McKenna, Rosemary (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth)
Mackinlay, Andrew (Thurrock)
Maclean, Rt. Hon. David John (Penrith and The Border)
McLoughlin, Patrick Allen (West Derbyshire)
McNamara, Kevin (Hull, North)
McNulty, Anthony James (Harrow, East)
MacShane, Denis (Rotherham)
Mactaggart, Fiona Margaret (Slough)
McWalter, Tony (Hemel Hempstead)
McWilliam, John David (Blaydon)
Mahmood, Khalid (Birmingham, Perry Barr)
Mahon, Alice (Halifax)
Malins, Humfrey Jonathon (Woking)
Mallaber, Judy (Amber Valley)
Mallon, Seamus (Newry and Armagh)
Mandelson, Rt. Hon. Peter Benjamin (Hartlepool) [*Resigned, September 2004*]
Mann, John (Bassetlaw)
Maples, John Cradock (Stratford-on-Avon)
Marris, Robert Howard (Wolverhampton, South-West)
Marsden, Gordon (Blackpool, South)
Marsden, Paul William Barry (Shrewsbury and Atcham)
Marshall, David (Glasgow, Shettleston)
Marshall, James (Leicester, South) [*Died, May 2004*]
Marshall-Andrews, Robert Graham (Medway)
Martin, Rt. Hon. Michael John (Glasgow, Springburn)
Martlew, Eric Anthony (Carlisle)
Mates, Michael John (East Hampshire)
Maude, Rt. Hon. Francis Anthony Aylmer (Horsham)
Mawhinney, Rt. Hon. Sir Brian Stanley (North-West Cambridgeshire)
May, Theresa Mary (Maidenhead)
Meacher, Rt. Hon. Michael Hugh (Oldham, West and Royton)
Meale, Joseph Alan (Mansfield)
Mercer, Patrick John (Newark)
Merron, Gillian Joanna (Lincoln)
Michael, Rt. Hon. Alun Edward (Cardiff, South and Penarth)
Milburn, Rt. Hon. Alan (Darlington)
Miliband, David Wright (South Shields)
Miller, Andrew Peter (Ellesmere Port and Neston)
Mitchell, Andrew John Bower (Sutton Coldfield)
Mitchell, Austin Vernon (Great Grimsby)
Moffatt, Laura Jean (Crawley)
Mole, Chris (Ipswich) [*By-election, November 2001*]
Moonie, Lewis George (Kirkcaldy)
Moore, Michael Kevin (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale)
Moran, Margaret (Luton, South)
Morgan, Julie (Cardiff, North)
Morley, Elliot Anthony (Scunthorpe)
Morris, Rt. Hon. Estelle (Birmingham, Yardley)
Moss, Malcolm Douglas (North-East Cambridgeshire)
Mountford, Kali Carol Jean (Colne Valley)
Mudie, George Edward (Leeds, East)
Mullin, Christopher John (Sunderland, South)
Munn, Margaret Patricia (Sheffield, Heeley)
Murphy, Denis (Wansbeck)
Murphy, Jim (Eastwood)
Murphy, Rt. Hon. Paul Peter (Torfaen)
Murrison, Andrew William (Westbury)

N

Naysmith, John Douglas (Bristol, North-West)
Norman, Archibald John (Tunbridge Wells)
Norris, Dan (Wansdyke)

O

Oaten, Mark (Winchester)
O'Brien, Michael (North Warwickshire)
O'Brien, Stephen Rothwell (Eddisbury)
O'Brien, William (Normanton)
O'Hara, Edward (Knowsley, South)
Olner, William John (Nuneaton)
O'Neill, Martin John (Ochil)
Opik, Lembit (Montgomeryshire)

Organ, Diana Mary (Forest of Dean)
Osborne, George Gideon Oliver (Tatton)
Osborne, Sandra (Ayr)
Ottaway, Richard Geoffrey James (Croydon, South)
Owen, Albert (Ynys Môn)

P

Page, Richard Lewis (South-West Hertfordshire)
Paice, James Edward Thornton (South-East Cambridgeshire)
Paisley, The Reverend Ian Richard Kyle (North Antrim)
Palmer, Nicholas Douglas (Broxtowe)
Paterson, Owen William (North Shropshire)
Pearson, Ian Phares (Dudley, South)
Perham, Linda (Ilford, North)
Picking, Anne (East Lothian)
Pickles, Eric Jack (Brentwood and Ongar)
Pickthall, Colin (West Lancashire)
Pike, Peter Leslie (Burnley)
Plaskitt, James Andrew (Warwick and Leamington)
Pollard, Kerry Patrick (St. Albans)
Pond, Christopher Richard (Gravesham)
Pope, Gregory James (Hyndburn)
Portillo, Rt. Hon. Michael Denzil Xavier (Kensington and Chelsea)
Pound, Stephen Pelham (Ealing, North)
Powell, Sir Raymond (Ogmore) [*Died, December 2001*]
Prentice, Bridget (Lewisham, East)
Prentice, Gordon (Pendle)
Prescott, Rt. Hon. John Leslie (Hull, East)
Price, Adam (East Carmarthen and Dinefwr)
Primarolo, Dawn (Bristol, South)
Prisk, Mark (Hertford and Stortford)
Prosser, Gwynfor Mathews (Dover)
Pugh, John David (Southport)
Purchase, Kenneth (Wolverhampton, North-East)
Purnell, James Mark Dakin (Stalybridge and Hyde)

Q

Quin, Rt. Hon. Joyce Gwendolen (Gateshead, East and Washington, West)
Quinn, Lawrence William (Scarborough and Whitby)

R

Rammell, William Ernest (Harlow)
Randall, Alexander John (Uxbridge)
Rapson, Sydney Norman John (Portsmouth, North)
Raynsford, Rt. Hon. Wyvill Richard Nicolls (Greenwich and Woolwich)
Redwood, Rt. Hon. John Alan (Wokingham)
Reed, Andrew John (Loughborough)
Reid, Alan (Argyll and Bute)
Reid, Rt. Hon. John (Hamilton, North and Bellshill)
Rendel, David Digby (Newbury)
Robathan, Andrew Robert George (Blaby)
Robertson, Angus (Moray)
Robertson, Hugh (Faversham and Mid-Kent)
Robertson, John (Glasgow, Anniesland)
Robertson, Laurence Anthony (Tewkesbury)
Robinson, Geoffrey (Coventry, North-West)
Robinson, Iris (Strangford)
Robinson, Peter David (Belfast, East)
Roche, Barbara Maureen (Hornsey and Wood Green)
Roe, Dame Marion Audrey (Broxbourne)
Rooney, Terence Henry (Bradford, North)
Rosindell, Andrew Richard (Romford)
Ross, Ernest (Dundee, West)
Roy, Frank (Motherwell and Wishaw)
Ruane, Christopher Shaun (Vale of Clwyd)
Ruddock, Joan Mary (Lewisham, Deptford)
Ruffley, David Laurie (Bury St. Edmunds)
Russell, Christine Margaret (City of Chester)
Russell, Robert Edward (Colchester)
Ryan, Joan Marie (Enfield, North)

S

Salmond, Alex Elliot Anderson (Banff and Buchan)
Salter, Martin John (Reading, West)
Sanders, Adrian Mark (Torbay)
Sarwar, Mohammad (Glasgow, Govan)
Savidge, Malcolm Kemp (Aberdeen, North)
Sawford, Philip Andrew (Kettering)
Sayeed, Jonathan (Mid-Bedfordshire)
Sedgemore, Brian Charles John (Hackney, South and Shoreditch)
Selous, Andrew Edmund Armstrong (South-West Bedfordshire)
Shaw, Jonathan Rowland (Chatham and Aylesford)
Sheerman, Barry (Huddersfield)
Shephard, Rt. Hon. Gillian Patricia (South-West Norfolk)
Shepherd, Richard Charles Scrimgeour (Aldridge-Brownhills)
Sheridan, James (West Renfrewshire)
Shipley, Debra Ann (Stourbridge)
Short, Rt. Hon. Clare (Birmingham, Ladywood)
Simmonds, Mark Jonathon Mortlock (Boston and Skegness)
Simon, Siôn Llewelyn (Birmingham, Erdington)
Simpson, Alan John (Nottingham, South)
Simpson, Keith Robert (Mid-Norfolk)
Singh, Marsha (Bradford, West)
Skinner, Dennis Edward (Bolsover)
Smith, Rt. Hon. Andrew David (Oxford, East)
Smith, Angela Evans (Basildon)
Smith, Rt. Hon. Christopher Robert (Islington, South and Finsbury)
Smith, Geraldine (Morecambe and Lunesdale)
Smith, Jacqueline Jill (Redditch)
Smith, John William Patrick (Vale of Glamorgan)
Smith, Llewellyn Thomas (Blaenau Gwent)
Smith, Sir Robert (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine)
Smyth, The Reverend William Martin (Belfast, South)
Soames, Arthur Nicholas Winston (Mid-Sussex)
Soley, Clive Stafford (Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush)
Southworth, Helen Mary (Warrington, South)
Spellar, John Francis (Warley)
Spelman, Caroline Alice (Meriden)
Spicer, Sir Michael William Hardy (West Worcestershire)
Spink, Robert Michael (Castle Point)
Spring, Richard John Grenville (West Suffolk)
Squire, Rachel Anne (Dunfermline, West)
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Sir John Paul (Tonbridge and Malling)
Starkey, Phyllis Margaret (Milton Keynes, South-West)
Steen, Anthony David (Totnes)
Steinberg, Gerald Neil (City of Durham)
Stevenson, George William (Stoke-on-Trent, South)
Stewart, David John (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber)
Stewart, Ian (Eccles)
Stinchcombe, Paul David (Wellingborough)
Stoate, Howard Geoffrey Alvan (Dartford)

Strang, Rt. Hon. Gavin Steel (Edinburgh, East and Musselburgh)
Straw, Rt. Hon. John Whitaker (Blackburn)
Streeter, Gary Nicholas (South-West Devon)
Stringer, Graham Eric (Manchester, Blackley)
Stuart, Gisela Gschaider (Birmingham, Edgbaston)
Stunell, Andrew (Hazel Grove)
Sutcliffe, Gerald (Bradford, South)
Swayne, Desmond Angus (New Forest, West)
Swire, Hugo (East Devon)
Syms, Robert Andrew Raymond (Poole)

T

Tami, Mark Richard (Alyn and Deeside)
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Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 24 November 2004

TREASURY

Investment Trust Companies

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Stephen Timms): The Treasury is today launching a consultation on the regulation of investment trust companies.

This is in response to a recommendation made by the Treasury Committee in its report into split-capital investment trusts in February 2003.

The aim of the consultation is to stimulate discussion about whether there is a need for additional regulation and, if so, possible options for doing so.

Copies of the consultation paper are available from the Library of the House, and the document can also be accessed on the Treasury website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Minerals Planning Policy and Good Practice Guidance

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am announcing today the publication of a consultation draft of a new policy statement on minerals planning and supporting good practice guidance for England. The draft of minerals policy statement 1 (MPS1) sets out the Government's core policies and principles for minerals planning in England to be applied in the preparation of regional spatial strategies and local development documents and in considering planning applications. The draft good practice guidance provides advice on how these policies and principles might be implemented.

When finally published MPS1, together with the good practice guidance, will replace minerals planning guidance note 1 "General Considerations and the Development Plan System", published in 1996 and equivalent general statements on minerals planning policies in a number of other MPGs. Draft MPS1 and the good practice guidance meet the commitment set out in the 2001 planning Green Paper for shorter, more focused planning policy statements separated from advice on non-policy matters.

Draft MPS1 takes account of relevant legislative changes since 1996 that affect minerals planning. It seeks to ensure that minerals planning and development is undertaken in as sustainable a manner as possible. It contributes to the Government's sustainable development objectives for planning and the creation of sustainable communities, by helping to secure the necessary supplies of materials, particularly for construction, while seeking to minimise the effect of mineral working on local communities and the environment, and by promoting the recycling of suitable materials.

We intend MPS1 to be supported by a number of specialist annexes setting out the appropriate planning policy considerations that need to be applied to individual types of minerals in view of their differing characteristics. A consultation draft on the first group of these, to deal with construction aggregates, brick clays, building stone and onshore oil and gas development, will be issued in the spring of 2005.

Consultation on draft MPS1 and the accompanying good practice guidance will run until 28 February 2005. Copies of the draft consultation papers have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Private Rented Sector (Licensing)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has today published for public consultation, a paper on licensing in the private rented sector concerning the implementation of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing.

This paper seeks to explain the Government's proposals for licensing in the private rented sector that have been set in place by the Housing Act, which has just received Royal Assent. In particular, the paper explains the Government's proposals for HMO licensing and sets out proposals for the secondary instruments required to implement these measures.

The powers in the Act and proposed secondary legislation will require local authorities to introduce licensing for HMOs. Licensing will enable local authorities to:

- Ensure that landlords are fit and proper persons or employ agents who are.
- Ensure that the standards of tenancy relations management and property management employed by a landlord or agent are adequate.
- Impose conditions on licenses to achieve improvements in management where necessary.
- Step in and manage properties where landlords refuse to meet the required criteria.
- Protect vulnerable tenants.
- Ensure that HMOs are not occupied by excessive numbers of people.
- Identify high risk HMOs and their landlords, so that health and safety measures under Part 1 of the Act can be targeted on the worst cases.

The paper invites interested parties to comment on how these powers should be implemented in relation to HMO licensing through the necessary secondary legislation.

Copies of the paper are being sent to a wide range of interested parties including local authorities, landlord and tenant organisations and others with an interest in this issue. The closing date for responses is 2 February 2005.

Copies of the paper will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and will be available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

HOME DEPARTMENT

National Policing Plan

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of the National Policing Plan 2005–08.

This is the third national policing plan and sets the framework and context for policing in England and Wales for the next three years.The national policing plan sets out the Government's vision of a police service which puts the law abiding citizen at the heart of all it does, while working in partnership to create and maintain safe, secure and confident communities. This will require the creation of a culture for policing which can tackle crime successfully from the local, to the national and international level.

The national policing plan will inform local planning and help to ensure that all communities know what they should expect from their local police force. It builds on the commitments for police reform set out in "Building Communities, Beating Crime: A Better Police Service for the 21st Century" published on 9 November. The national policing plan 2005–08 is available on the website at: www.policereform.gov.uk.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit

The Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Hilary Benn): Further to my written statement to the House of 16 September 2005, *Official Report*, columns 173–174WS, together with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Defence, I wish to inform Parliament that a copy of a public consultation document on improving the United Kingdom's contribution to post conflict stabilisation has been placed in the Library. It invites contributions on the establishment of an interdepartmental post conflict reconstruction unit.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Launch of the Electronic Parliamentary Community (ePC)

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Hain): I am pleased to announce today the launch of the electronic parliamentary community (ePC). This network, initiated by my office, establishes, for the first time, the electronic transfer of information between Government and Parliament.

This first phase of ePC provides the mechanism to deliver parliamentary questions from the House of Commons to Government Departments, and the answers to questions and written ministerial statements from Government to the Commons, principally Hansard and the Table Office at this stage.

In future, and subject to further discussion with the House authorities, it is hoped that this system may be extended to cover other information exchanged between Government and Parliament.

This is a ground-breaking system, and I am grateful to the knowledge network (part of the e-Government unit), to parliamentary staff for their work on this project, ensuring its delivery to tight and challenging deadlines and to the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre (NISCC) for their assistance in establishing the secure connection between Parliament and Government.

Leader of the House of Commons Website

The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Peter Hain): I have launched an updated version of the website for the Office of Leader of the House of Commons www.commonsleader.gov.uk.

Users will now be able to see online the Government's Legislative Programme for the forthcoming session of Parliament—the first time that details of bills announced in the Queen's Speech have been published electronically on one site.

To encourage interest in this site, the office will also provide an email alert service which will inform users of changes to the site, particularly those affecting Government business in the House of Commons, i.e. the weekly business statement.

Also included is a historical section setting out the biographical details of individuals who have held the post of Leader of the House of Commons. The cost for site refresh including new functionality was £7,500.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy): I have today placed before this House a copy of the second annual report of the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC Foundation which was sent to me under Article 8(2) of the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC Foundation Regulations 2002. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library of the House.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Advantage West Midlands (Board Appointments)

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Jacqui Smith): I would like to inform Members of the House that, as part of a rolling programme of appointments, I have decided to appoint three new board members to Advantage West Midlands. The new appointees will take up their positions on the 14 December 2004 and their names are set out below.

The new board members will replace members whose terms of office end in December this year, and they will bring experiences from business, trade unions and local authorities.

Decisions on the appointments have been made following open competition in accordance with the guidelines set down in the Commissioner for Public Appointments' code of practice, and following consultation with key national and regional players.

AWM (New Members)

Sue Prince

Diane Rayner

Gerard Coyne

Yorkshire Forward (Board Appointments)

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Jacqui Smith): I would like to inform Members of the House that, as part of a rolling programme of appointments, I have decided to appoint six new board members to "Yorkshire Forward". The new appointees, including one re-appointee, will take up their positions on the 14 December 2004 and their names are set out below.

The new board members will replace members whose terms of office end in December this year. They will bring experience from business, local authorities and the voluntary sector.

Decisions on the appointments have been made following open competition in accordance with the guidelines set down in the Commissioner for Public Appointments code of practice, and following consultation with key national and regional players.

YF (New Members)

Lord Christopher Haskins (re-appointed)

Arshad Javed

Jan Wilson

Linda Pollard

Aiden Rave

Laura Moynahan

TRANSPORT

Air Traffic Control (North Atlantic)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Charlotte Atkins): The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland have now agreed that a northern Oceanic transitional area (NOTA) will be established, in stages from January 2005, in the Shanwick Oceanic airspace to the north-west of Ireland. The Republic of Ireland will provide air traffic control and related services in the NOTA while National Air Traffic Services (NATS) will provide these services in the rest of the Shanwick sector. Regulatory control for the NOTA will also transfer from the Civil Aviation Authority to the Irish Aviation Authority at a date agreed by the regulators.

The agreement paves the way for increasing co-operation and the progression to more integrated operations between NATS and its Irish counterpart, and gives NATS security of tenure in providing Oceanic air traffic control services for the next 25 years.

I have placed a copy of the exchange of letters between the UK and Ireland in the Library of the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Herefordshire Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) good practice review of Herefordshire council was published today and copies of the review have been placed in the Library.

One of the benefit fraud inspectorate's key functions is to improve the effectiveness and security of benefits administration by disseminating good practice. good practice reviews are a new initiative for the inspectorate and are designed to identify practices and procedures that can help other local authorities. The good practice review of Herefordshire council has identified many good practices and I am grateful to the council for its participation.

The review found over 100 good practices covering all areas of performance standards including:

annually assessment of revenues and benefits services against a quality framework, based on an excellence model;

good use of management information to identify trends and allocate resources effectively;

answering 97 per cent. of telephone calls within 15 seconds and seeing 97 per cent. of customers within 10 minutes of arrival at the office in 2003-04;

increasing take-up of housing benefits by a range of campaigns;

reducing the number of days to process changes of circumstances;

performing a 10 per cent. check of corporate quality officers' work to ensure accuracy and consistency;

supplying landlords with plenty of information to ensure they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities;

relocating its main customer enquiries office to a building that meets the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act;

performing good quality fraud investigations that comply with all legal requirements reducing to 14 days the time it takes to send first reminders to debtors.

I recommend the review and recommend that all local authorities read it and consider if they can benefit from the application of any of the good practices identified.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 25 November 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Section 45 Code of Practice

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): The following statement has been made by my right hon. Friend, Baroness Ashton of Upholland, in the other place today.

"The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs has today laid before Parliament, in accordance with section 45(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, a revised code of practice on the discharge of public authorities' functions under part I of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This code of practice has been revised after close consultation with the information commissioner's office.

The previous section 45 code of practice was issued in November 2002, and quite rightly incorporated a great deal of best practice information. This information is now contained in the suite of guidance recently issued by the DCA, and in the series of awareness guides issued by the information commissioners' office. This revised code of practice relates to those areas specified by section 45(2)(a)–(e). It provides clear guidance on providing advice and assistance to applicants, transferring requests to other authorities, consulting third parties, the use of confidentiality clauses relating to information disclosure in contracts and the provision of internal complaints procedures in public authorities.

I will keep the section 45 code of practice under review once the Freedom of Information Act has been fully implemented, and shall work closely with the information commissioner to identify those areas where any further guidance is necessary."

Queen's Counsel

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): The following statement has been made by my right hon. and noble learned Friend, the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton.

"In May 2004 I told the House that I had asked the legal professions in England & Wales and in Northern Ireland to devise an improved scheme for appointing Queen's Counsel. I am pleased to be able to say the Bar Council and the Law Society in England & Wales have reached agreement on a set of competences against which applicants for the QC rank should be assessed, and on an outline of the process for doing so. I have placed copies of both the competency framework and the outline process in the Library.

Considerable work still needs to be done to refine some of the details and to develop the mechanics of the assessment process. Nonetheless, this is a very encouraging development. I congratulate the professional bodies on what they have achieved so far, and look forward to the introduction of a new and better system.

The Bar Council and Law Society in Northern Ireland are continuing to work on a similar scheme tailored to the requirements of their jurisdiction. They hope to make an announcement soon."

DEFENCE

End-to-End Logistics Implementation: Air Depth Support

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): Following the announcement on the 16 September of my preferred option for future military aircraft support and the end of the trade unions consultation period, I am announcing my decision to implement the preferred option.

This will mean that the support for the tornado GR4 aircraft will be concentrated forward to the main operating base (MOB) at RAF Marham; with the work on Tornado F3 aircraft remaining "as is" with support being carried out at both the MOB and DARA St Athan until the aircraft's out-of-service date. Depth support for Lynx, Chinook and Sea King will be concentrated backwards to DARA Fleetlands.

This decision is based on comprehensive analysis which was carried out on an objective and impartial basis, and offers the best outcome for defence in terms of operational effectiveness and value for money. It does, however, have implications for our military and civilian workforce, as well as for our partners in industry who undertake depth support of military aircraft.

At the time of the announcement, it was made clear that the Ministry of Defence would explore with other Government Departments, including the Welsh Assembly and the Wales Office, alternative options for the viable and economic use of St. Athan after 2009, based on its transformation into an aerospace centre of excellence. Officials from my Department, along with DARA senior management, have already had meetings with Welsh Assembly and Wales Office staff to explore possible options, and have agreed a strategic approach for taking this forward as a matter of urgency.

Implementation of the decision will be taken forward by the chief of defence logistics—as the process owner for defence logistics—and responsible for the programme to deliver the changes to air depth support. Detailed consultation with the trade unions on the implementation of the decision will also begin.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Council Art Exhibitions Overseas

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Chris Mullin): The British Council, although not a Government Department, receives a substantial grant-in-aid from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The council regularly organises or sponsors exhibitions overseas of works of art loaned from national galleries and private collections in the United Kingdom. It provides certain assurances or guarantees in respect of loss or damage while these works are on loan.

In the six months ending on 30 September 2004, the British Council provided such assurances to four national lenders and undertakings to 85 private lenders. The value of the contingent liabilities outstanding on 30 September in respect of private lenders was £6,120,870. No liabilities to national galleries existed at that date.

Iraq: Export Licence Application

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): Following consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Trade and Industry recently approved an open individual export licence for a media company to export non-lethal military list goods for the personnel protection of its staff worldwide.

Her Majesty's Government considers it appropriate to grant licences, on a case-by-case basis, for the export of non-lethal military list goods, including protective clothing and armoured vehicles, for the use by media companies and non-governmental organisations working in hostile environments, including embargoed destinations. Future applications will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis against this policy decision and the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria, taking into account the circumstances prevailing at the time.

HEALTH

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority Annual Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): The 2003–04 annual report of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority was laid before the House today. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

National Health Service Estate Maintenance

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): A £17 billion improvement programme is being undertaken to improve the NHS estate. As a result of this investment the amount of the estate dating from before 1948 has halved since 1995. However, because of flaws in the current methodology, backlog maintenance figures do not reflect these improvements. A validation exercise has been undertaken on the 2002–03 backlog maintenance figures, prompted by concerns expressed by the NHS that these figures were both unrealistically high and not being consistently calculated and collected across the NHS.

We have decided to revise the way we measure backlog maintenance to give a more accurate picture of the condition of the NHS estate, to give the NHS a clearer idea of its priorities in improving its buildings, and to allow managers to continue making the improvements that will build even better environments for both patients and staff. It will help the Healthcare Commission more accurately measure NHS performance on the new national standards.

To ensure the estate continues to be maintained and improved, a much more constructive and consistent revised backlog measure, risk adjusted backlog maintenance, has been developed with the NHS. This places greater emphasis on identifying and measuring risk to business continuity and safety to patients, visitors and staff and has a greater focus on the quality of the estate and the remaining life of the building.

Backlog maintenance figures and the estimated risk adjusted figures for 2003–04 have been placed in the Library.

Tackling Health Inequalities

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): The Public Health White Paper, "Choosing Health—Making Healthy Choices Easier" set out the importance of ensuring that as the country strives to improve its health a priority must be given to tackling health inequalities so that all groups in society benefit from improvements in public health.

The Government have set public service agreement targets to address geographical inequalities in life expectancy, cancer, heart disease, stroke and related diseases. The targets aim to see faster progress compared to the average in the "fifth of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators". Achievement of the targets will be assessed on the outcomes for this group in 2010. The local authorities and primary care trusts which are in these areas, the so-called spearhead group, has been published.

The spearhead group is made up of 70 local authorities and 88 primary care trusts, based upon the local authority areas that are in the bottom fifth nationally for three or more of the following five factors:

- Male life expectancy at birth
- Female life expectancy at birth
- Cancer mortality rate in under 75s
- Cardio vascular disease mortality rate in under 75s
- Index of multiple deprivation 2004, local authority summary, average score

The list of local authorities and primary care trusts in the spearhead group is available in the Library.

For more information on health inequalities and on the "spearhead group": http://www.dh.gov.uk/healthinequalities

For more information on the SR2004 PSA targets: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_index.cfm

PRIME MINISTER

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe/ Assembly of Western European Union

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am pleased to announce that my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Thamesmead (John Austin) and my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth North (Syd Rapson BEM) have been appointed full members of the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of Western European Union.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Low Pay Commission (Government Evidence)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): I am pleased to announce that the government submitted their evidence to the Low Pay Commission today. The commission will take this and all the other evidence received into account when preparing their next report, which will be submitted to the government by the end of February 2005.

Copies of the Government's evidence have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and on the Department of Trade and Industry website at: www.dti.gov.uk

Operating and Financial Review

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Jacqui Smith): My Department published a consultation on 5 May 2004 seeking views on draft regulations to implement a new statutory operating and financial review (OFR) and certain provisions of the accounts modernisation directive, requiring an enhanced review of a company's business in the directors' report.

This statement explains how the Government intends to proceed in the light of responses to the consultation document. I am grateful to all those who responded to the consultation. A summary of the responses will be placed on the DTI website next month and in the Libraries of both Houses.

Our OFR proposals have been subject to extensive public consultation over the last four years. In making this statement today I am clear that the OFR will improve the quality, usefulness and relevance of information provided by quoted companies—helping investors, shareholders and other interested parties get a better understanding of a company's operations and its future business prospects.

The OFR represents a real opportunity for business to promote long-term value creation. Improved shareholder engagement will help strengthen corporate performance and boost confidence in UK companies. The OFR is a vital part of the DTI's drive for effective corporate governance, which will benefit investors, business and the economy at large by improving the quality of investment decisions and the allocation of capital.

I have considered consultees' comments carefully with a view to ensuring companies are able to provide full and frank disclosures in a cost effective and efficient way. This will enhance the usefulness of the OFR for both shareholders and other stakeholders. As a result, I am amending some of the earlier proposals to ensure that the regulations achieve the Government's overarching policy objectives.

On coverage for the OFR, I have considered the arguments for both extending the OFR (to large private companies) and for narrowing it (to larger quoted companies only). I have concluded that the draft regulations should stand as drafted. There will be no extension of scope for the OFR and it will apply to quoted companies only.

I have also considered the standard of care required of directors preparing the OFR, as well as the role of auditors. On the first point, I have decided to drop the requirement that auditors give an opinion on whether the directors have used due and careful enquiry in preparing the OFR. This should address concerns that we might be requiring a different legal standard for this type of corporate report.

On the second point, I am simplifying the role of the auditors. I am retaining the requirement that auditors should consider whether the OFR is consistent with the company's accounts, and whether it contains any inconsistencies based on any matters that have come to their attention while conducting the company audit.

This reflects concerns that having auditors review the process would prove difficult and costly, and have the unintended consequence of discouraging full and frank reporting by reducing the OFR into an anodyne box-ticking exercise.

I believe directors can be open and candid with information on the basis that a distinction can be made between those statements made based on good faith judgments, and those made based on objectively verifiable data. Guidance notes will make clear to companies that they may wish to advise members of the need to treat with caution good faith judgments, in particular those relating to future events or prospects. As well, the regulations will make clear that directors will not be required to disclose specific information about impending developments or specific matters in the course of negotiation.

Following the consultation, we believe the objectives and content of the OFR are right. No changes of substance will be made therefore and there will be no extension of content.

Having met the review objective and general requirements of the schedule, directors will then need to consider and include information relating to their environmental, employment, and social and community policies to the extent necessary for shareholders to understand how these are impacting the business and wider community.

With regard to enforcement, I believe the OFR warrants the implementation of a sturdy regime but must be allowed a chance to bed-in. I have therefore decided to delay the FRRP's role in administrative enforcement until one year after the duty to prepare OFRs has kicked in. This means the FRRP will start looking at OFRs prepared for financial years starting on or after 1 April 2006.

I have also addressed potential cost burdens arising from our proposal to make mandatory hard-copy circulation of the OFR. Where shareholders have agreed to receive summary financial statements, there will be no requirement for the full OFR to be sent, and shareholders will be notified of the availability of the OFR on the company website.

In addition, potential duplication of reporting requirements occasioned by the introduction of the EU modernisation directive will be avoided. All companies in a group other than small companies will be required to produce individual directors' reports or, if they are

quoted, individual OFRs with the ultimate parent company also producing a group report (but not an individual report). Where the parent is a quoted company, the OFR will be prepared for the group. Small and medium sized companies will be allowed to take full advantage of reporting exemptions under EU accounting directives, including those that that are part of a group.

Finally, on timing, I intend to lay the regulations within the next two months. Given concerns expressed in consultation about the need for adequate preparation time, the date the regulations come into effect will be delayed until financial years beginning on or after 1 April 2005 (and not 1 January 2005), thus giving business three extra months to absorb the new reporting standard and prepare for implementation.

We know the business environment is changing dramatically and at an accelerating pace. Companies are becoming increasingly complex and information needs are changing. This was reflected during the consultation and in the responses from stakeholders: companies, institutional investors, professional bodies, auditors, trades unions and representative organisations.

It is evident that vibrant capital markets rely on interventions and institutions that promote the governance of companies. Corporate governance structures ensure shareholders receive reliable information about the value of companies, while motivating directors and managers to maximise long term value creation. I believe the OFR is a crucial element in the corporate governance agenda, and will contribute to raising the productivity of British companies, helping generate prosperity for all.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 29 November 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): Earlier today my right hon. and noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, Baroness Ashton of Upholland, made a statement in the other place reporting that she has today laid before Parliament, in accordance with section 87(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the fourth and final report on proposals for bringing fully into force those provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which have yet to be implemented.

The report details what action has been taken by my Department in the final year before full implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. It also details the actions taken by other departments and public authorities across the public sector in preparation for full implementation of the Freedom of Information Act on 1 January 2005.

A great deal of work has been done in this final year before full implementation and the report contains many examples of best practice in implementation. The Government are confident that the substantial programme of work reflected in this report will enable public authorities to make a success of the Freedom of Information Act and to realise the benefits of greater openness to both Government and the citizen.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Temporary Stop Notices

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): Following the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's review of the planning enforcement system in England we took the opportunity to introduce a new enforcement power—the temporary stop notice—in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. There was overwhelming support for the introduction of these new provisions from local authorities. I am today announcing a period of consultation with a view to commencing these new powers in spring 2005.

Temporary stop notices provide a new power to local planning authorities and the means to prevent unauthorised development at an early stage without first having to issue an enforcement notice.

The temporary stop notice provides the local authority with a discretionary power to stop a breach of planning control for a limited period of time to enable it to decide whether further enforcement is appropriate and what action should be taken.

The Act provides that temporary stop notices may not be used against dwelling houses. During the passage of the Bill the issue of the treatment of caravans was raised. The Government responded that it would introduce regulations that would mirror the exemption for buildings.

The draft regulations set out the circumstances in which temporary stop notices may not be used. The temporary stop notice may not be used against caravans which are occupied as a sole or main residence on site and their immediate removal won't be required until any follow-up enforcement action is taken. Any further associated works will be subject to the temporary stop notice.

However, in circumstances where the effect of allowing the caravans to remain on the site for even a limited period would cause serious harm to the local amenity that would outweigh the benefit to the occupiers of the caravans, a temporary stop notice can be used immediately. This approach strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of gypsies and travellers and rights of local authorities to take action against unauthorised development in those particular circumstances where this is causing serious and immediate harm.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

State Veterinary Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): In July this year my Department published a consultation document, setting out proposals to turn the state veterinary service into an executive agency on 1 April 2005. The consultation followed an earlier review to identify options for improved efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of veterinary services across the Department.

The consultation has now concluded. Comments and observations were received from a cross section of customers, including veterinary experts, livestock owners and the farming community. These responses have been analysed and have been valuable in helping us to decide on the best way forward for the state veterinary service.

The decision to create an executive agency was generally supported by consultees and I have therefore decided to continue with the programme to launch the new agency on 1 April 2005.

I believe this will help further the aims of the animal health and welfare strategy towards developing a new partnership in which we can make a lasting and continuous improvement in the health and welfare of kept animals while protecting society, the economy and the environment from the effect of animal diseases. We are pledged to working with all customers and stakeholders, listening to their concerns and their counsel and taking their views into account as the agency takes shape.

The move to agency status for the state veterinary service will provide the flexibilities needed to create an organisation focussed on delivery with stronger systems and controls; business management expertise; working in partnership with other delivery bodies on the ground

and with policy colleagues in Defra to play its full part in the implementation of the animal health and welfare strategy.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released its Afghanistan opium survey 2004 on 18 November. The survey showed that opium poppy cultivation increased by 64 per cent. from 80,000 hectares in 2003 to 131,000 hectares in 2004 while production rose by 17 per cent. from 3,600 tonnes in 2003 to 4,200 tonnes. The report is available on the UNODC website at www.unodc.org.

The UK uses the UN results and the trends they demonstrate as a reference point for Afghanistan, as we do for the rest of the world. This has been the case since UNODC started its surveys in Afghanistan in the 1993–94 growing season.

The UK recognises that the Afghan Government are working in very difficult circumstances. The security situation remains serious. Drugs are deeply embedded in all levels of society. The establishment of governance, delivery of development aid and the establishment of law and order cannot proceed as quickly as Afghanistan and her partners would like to see. The 2004 UN survey results make clear the scale of the task ahead but the Afghans' strategy and the practical measures they are putting in place remain right.

As lead co-ordinating nation on counter-narcotics in Afghanistan, the UK Government are already taking forward with the Afghans a comprehensive programme that sets the conditions for more visible results in the future. It covers: alternative livelihoods; eradication; criminal justice; law enforcement and information and treatment campaigns to raise awareness and tackle the problems of addiction in Afghanistan itself.

With the Afghan Government and the international community, we recognise that we must and will do more in the coming year across each of the five main pillars of the strategy. By securing wider international support, the UK will increase its support for Afghanistan's national drug control strategy in the coming year.

TRANSPORT

Rail Proposals (Disability Discrimination Bill)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Charlotte Atkins): The Government have today announced that their preferred end date by which all rail vehicles will have to meet the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998 (RVAR) is 2020. It has also announced that it intends to require access improvements to those features which are included in plans when rail vehicles are being refurbished.

The announcement follows the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Bill in the House of Lords on Thursday 25 November. The Bill includes powers to give effect to these measures.

Draft regulations covering these proposals, which apply to England, Scotland and Wales, will be the subject of a public consultation process during the passage of the Bill. Northern Ireland will be holding their own separate consultation process on these issues in due course.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 30 November 2004

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Government Indemnity Scheme

The Minister for the Arts (Estelle Morris): The provision for the Government indemnity scheme is made by the National Heritage Act 1980. The scheme facilitates public access to loans of works of art and other objects for public display made to museums, galleries and other such institutions by private owners and non-national institutions. It does this by indemnifying lenders against loss or damage to their loan. Loans covered by the scheme must be for public benefit. The scheme also covers loans of such objects for study purposes within borrowing institutions where this would contribute materially to the public's understanding or appreciation of the loan. Examples of this are enhancing interpretation or explanation to the public of objects or bringing into the public domain the conclusions of any study.

In the six month period ended 30 September, the following undertakings to indemnify were given under section 16 by the relevant Departments for objects on loan to national and non-national institutions. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport issued 580 undertakings, the Scottish Executive Education Department issued 184 undertakings and the National Assembly for Wales issued 139.

The value of contingent liabilities in respect of undertakings given at any time under section 16 and which remained outstanding as at 30 September for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport are £2,462,963,504. The value of section 16 contingent liabilities as at 30 September for the Scottish Executive Education Department are £755,072,231 and £64,366,311 for the National Assembly for Wales.

The value of non-statutory Government indemnities to cover loans handled by the Government art collection and which remained outstanding as at 30 September are £5,100,000.

The value of non-statutory undertakings given to Her Majesty in respect of loans from the royal collection and which remained outstanding as at 30 September are £162,094,556.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Regional Planning Guidance for the South-East (RPG9)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is today publishing the revised chapters on "Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy" (chapter 10) and "Tourism and Related Sports and Recreation (Chapter 14)—regional planning guidance for the south-east (RPG9)." This follows the examination in public into the draft chapters in May 2003, the panel report in March 2004, and the consultation on the Secretary of State's proposed changes that closed on 3 September 2004.

These chapters form an integral part of regional planning guidance (RPG) for the South East and represent a revision to RPG9, as published in March 2001. Following commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill (September 2004) this will now form part of the statutory regional spatial strategy (RSS).

Other recent partial reviews are either completed or in their final stages. The Secretary of State has recently published his proposed changes on the Milton Keynes and south midlands sub regional strategy, we are awaiting the panel's report on the examination in public on waste and minerals and we have already published revised versions of the regional transport strategy (RTS) and the Ashford growth area amendments.

Chapter 10 aims to promote a more sustainable pattern of energy use and generation whilst ensuring that development does not harm the region's environment or the quality of life of its people. Chapter 14 sets out policies on tourism, related sports and recreation and forms an additional chapter to RPG9.

The consultation period for the proposed changes to the draft chapters ended on 3 September 2004 with some 90 responses from individuals and organisations. Respondents were broadly supportive of the proposed changes.

In relation to chapter 10, the most significant changes were to policy INF 8 and supporting text to reflect that landscape character assessment should be used where available. In relation to chapter 14 final changes are concerned with textual amendments and further description in sections.

These chapters are integral and clearly identifiable parts of RPG9. It will be reviewed through the development of the spatial strategy for the south-east, resulting in the publication of the regional spatial strategy for the south-east—"the South-East Plan". This work has already begun and a draft is expected in 2005.

Copies of the relevant documents are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I have today published a consultation paper on proposed secondary legislation and guidance to implement some of the development control provisions in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. We intend that, after a three month consultation period and consideration of the responses received, the provisions would come into effect in May 2005.

We are preparing to implement the development control provisions in part 4 of the Act in stages. Where the provisions in the Act require secondary legislation we are proposing changes to the general development procedure order. The paper proposes the form and content for economic impact reports for major infrastructure projects. The paper proposes a 21-day period in which statutory consultees must respond to consultation on planning applications. Last year some consultees pointed out the inconsistency between this

period and the ability of local planning authorities (LPAS) to determine applications within 14 days. We are now proposing that LPAS should not determine applications until the consultee has responded or after 21 days, whichever is the sooner.

The consultation includes updated guidance on some of the provisions in the Act for which secondary legislation is not required. The guidance refers to the right of appeal for non-determination of a similar repeat application. We will not be introducing the power to decline to determine overlapping application (twin-tracking) until the performance of local authorities in handling planning applications improves.

There is revised draft guidance on the duration of permission and consent. The Act reduces the default period for the commencement of a detailed permission from five to three years. The Government have acknowledged that periods longer than three years might be appropriate in some cases. For most major developments, such as complex regeneration projects, outline rather than detailed applications are likely to be the route to permission. The period for approval of reserved matters after outline permission has been granted will normally remain as three years. The guidance makes clear the need for flexibility on the part of local authorities in their dealings with applicants on the duration of permissions and consents.

There is also draft guidance on consultation with regional planning bodies (RPBs) on certain applications where development would be of major importance for the implementation of the regional spatial strategy or for other types of development on which RPBs specify that they wish to be consulted.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Schools' Capital

The Minister for School Standards (Mr. David Miliband): I am today announcing details of the allocation of schools capital over the spending review period for 2006–07 to 2007–08. Investment in schools is at record levels, and every maintained school and every education authority and diocese in England will benefit from our capital programmes. As well as continued substantial investment in primary schools, we will now drive forward significantly the modernisation of the secondary school estate, further to my statement of 12 February announcing the first wave of authorities to benefit from the Building Schools for the Future programme.

My announcement will support the five-year strategy for educational improvement which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced in July, and continues and increases the largest sustained programme of capital investment in schools which this country has ever seen. From an inadequate base of under £700 million in 1996–97, government support for capital investment in schools has risen to £4.9 billion this year, will be £5.5 billion next year, £5.8 billion in 2006–07 and will reach £6.3 billion by 2007–08. This is a nine-fold increase since this Government came to power. The table at the end of this statement give details of our funding proposals.

Since this Government came to office, we have provided substantial investment for schools—£20 billion up to this year—so that the vast backlog of neglect and repairs which made many schools virtually uninhabitable has been addressed. We have revised and improved our design and environmental guidelines for schools to reflect the standards-driven needs of twenty-first century teaching and learning, and to capture the benefits of ICT development. We have increased expectations on environmental quality, diversity and inclusion. We are placing schools at the centre of their communities, offering extended facilities and regaining the position that they held in earlier years, but lost as their buildings decayed.

We have made very substantial progress in recent years. But much remains to do, to bring all schools up to the standards that we expect for our children. All schools and authorities will benefit from this capital programme, which provides over a further £17 billion investment over the next three years.

Importantly, all schools will continue to get their own direct capital to improve their buildings. This will rise from £800 million in 2005–06 to over £1 billion in 2007–08, when the typical primary school will get over £34,000 and a typical secondary £113,000. This programme will, from 2006–07, include schools' direct funding for improving their ICT equipment, part of the £1.1 billion of ICT investment in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

We will also continue to provide authorities with needs-related funding for their local priorities. £2.2 billion will be allocated by formulae to authorities across 2006–07 and 2007–08 from the modernisation, basic need and schools access Initiative programmes. From this announcement, authorities will have three year certainty on the bulk of their capital funding, and it will as usual be delivered through the single capital pot to enable authorities to plan flexibly to meet their schools' needs.

To ensure that there is flexibility within the overall programme, we aim to increase the funding available to the targeted capital fund, to £500 million a year by 2007–08. This will ensure that we can support authorities which have exceptional capital needs, including exceptional pupil growth through the basic need safety valve.

An equitable share of the capital settlement of over £900 million will also be provided for the needs of schools in the voluntary aided sector in these years.

I am announcing today allocations from the targeted capital fund for 2005–06, of £233 million for a total of 51 local authority projects and 20 projects in voluntary aided schools. These cover a wide range of projects, including accommodation for pupils with special needs, sports facilities, extended schools facilities, modernisation of teaching accommodation, replacement of primary school buildings, and two new voluntary aided schools—one Jewish and one Islamic. I am providing a further £12 million of additional basic need funding where there is exceptional growth in pupil numbers in Haringey, Cambridge, Thurrock, and Milton Keynes.

I am also announcing today the 20 new authorities which will be included in the second and third waves of building schools for the future (BSF), which aims to renew every secondary school in the country. The geographical areas, including 230 schools in total, have been prioritised according to relative educational and

social need, as measured by pupils' GCSE attainment and eligibility for free school meals; and the planning and financial requirements of the programme. These allocations bring the total number of authorities included in the programme by 2007–08 to 39 over a quarter of all authorities.

As we made clear in the five year strategy for children and learners published in July, BSF plans will be assessed according to rigorous school improvement criteria and funding will not be released until the Government and local people are satisfied that they meet the full potential for transforming standards. This includes considering academies and other options for new schools in their plans. As we said in the five year strategy, the Government will not stand by and allow local authorities to sustain failure by refusing to engage with Academies where they can meet parental demand for good school places. This policy is already being applied to wave one authorities, where most BSF plans are yet to be approved, and will be applied to all the further waves being announced today.

Further, I am announcing our ambition that, by 2011, all local authorities will either have a major secondary rebuilding project under way through BSF, with at least three of their secondary schools included, or else have the resources to rebuild at least one of their secondary schools in greatest need through the academies programme and the targeted capital fund. By 2016, major rebuilding and remodelling will have started in every local authority in line with BSF plans developed by them. Final allocations for waves four onwards of BSF are of course subject to future public spending decisions and will be confirmed in future spending reviews.

I am allocating over £830 million funding in 2006–07 and 2007–08 to support the development of additional academies to work to our target of having 200 open or in procurement by 2010. I am also providing a further £70 million to reach our target of universal specialism in secondary schools by the end of the period.

My officials will give all authorities an indication of when they may expect to start in the BSF programme so that they can plan confidently and use their other funding efficiently before they get this major investment. We will work with every authority to see how these commitments and their own financial flexibilities through delegated funding and prudential borrowing can be combined to deliver maximum early progress on BSF.

We have decided to allocate schools capital to a new joined-up budget for 16 to 19 provision in schools and colleges. The Learning and Skills Council will also contribute to the combined pot, which it will administer, worth in total £120 million in 2006–07 and £180 million in 2007–08.

Schools which have robust sustainable travel plans put in place will be able to access a further £40 million of devolved formula capital over the period.

I am providing all hon. Members with detailed information on all of today's allocations which affect the local authorities in their constituencies.

Table: Schools Capital Funding from 2005–06 until 2007–08

Figures in £ million	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	
Schools Devolved Funding	805	1,000	1,050	
LEA Delegated funding				
Modernisation	602	602	602	Note 1
Basic Need	590	400	400	Note 2
Schools Access Initiative	84	84	84	Note 3
BSF Programme	2,118	2,177	2,240	Note 4
Academies	207	365	467	
Other ICT	459	249	284	Note 5
VA Schools	352	444	473	
Specialist Schools	56	35	35	
LSC 16–19 Budget contribution	0	70	100	
Targeted Capital Fund	200	300	500	
Sustainable Transport	20	20	20	
Other Programmes	22	9	10	
Total	5,515	5,755	6,265	

Notes:

1. Modernisation is allocated on pupil numbers and relative building need from survey data.
2. Basic Need is allocated on pupil numbers and projected pupil number growth.
3. Schools Access Initiative is allocated on pupil numbers.
4. Includes £1.2/1.25/1.3 billion of PFI credits.
5. 2006–07 and 2007–08 figures exclude ICT capital delivered directly to schools as devolved funding.

HEALTH

NHS Bureaucracy

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): On 22 July, *Official Report*, column 61WS, I announced the completion of the review of my Departments arm's length bodies (ALBs). I made it clear then that there is considerable scope to improve efficiency and reduce bureaucracy in the ALB sector and I reiterated the following parameters for the review:

a 50 per cent. reduction in the number of ALBs;

a saving in expenditure by ALBs of £0.5 billion by 2007–08; and

a reduction in posts of 25 per cent. in the same period.

Detailed discussions have been held with all interested parties about how to implement these changes. We are now publishing the next steps to be taken in implementing the review of the Department's arm's length bodies, the conclusions of which were published in July in the report "Reconfiguring the Department of Health's Arm's Length Bodies". As well as next steps, reconfiguring the Department of Health's arm's length bodies implementation framework, sets out the principles, processes and timescales by which we will implement the ALB change programme. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The ALB programme is part of a wider programme of change to improve efficiency and cut bureaucracy in the management of the national health service. The objective of all these activities is to reduce the burden on the frontline and free up more resources for the delivery of frontline services to patients and users. This wider programme is to ensure that the increased investment in the NHS—42 per cent. in real terms from 2003–04 to 2007–08—is accompanied by modernisation that cuts out waste.

The ALB change programme itself will deliver a redistribution to the frontline of at least £0.5 billion a year by the end of 2007–08. The number of ALBs will be reduced to 20 from the base year of 2003–04, despite the sector assuming new functions under statutes approved by Parliament. Even with these new functions, which bring new costs, we will be setting the 2005–06 budget for the ALB sector so that it will cost about £100 million a year less to run than in 2003–04. A further £200 million a year will become available for redistribution to the frontline by the end of 2006–07 and again in 2007–08. This will inevitably mean significant changes in the organisation, staffing, financing and governance of the ALB sector. These changes must now be delivered.

One of the changes in the ALB sector is the establishment of a health and social care information centre to coordinate and streamline the collection and dissemination of data to those who use it. This will build on the work done by the Department in reducing demands for information from the NHS frontline. Since March 2003 the Department has reduced the burden of central returns by about 160 person years and this will have risen to 400 person years when we reach April 2005. That means 400 people in the NHS will be freed up for frontline operations through the Department reducing and simplifying its statistical collection. Now it is the turn of the inspectorates, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts, royal colleges and others to follow the Department of Health's example by streamlining their statistical collection through the new health and social care information centre.

Cutting overheads is now a key part of any modern business. That is why we expect substantial reductions in the overheads of the ALB sector. By 2007–08 we expect annual savings in overheads of £35–40 million and significant progress towards that made in ALB plans from 2005–06. This will be achieved by merging bodies, sharing back office services and moving to cheaper locations.

There is a tendency for all organisations to undergo "mission creep" and add functions. The ALB Review is about slimming down the sector to the essentials and to do those essentials more effectively. That is why we are expecting major savings for redistribution to the frontline from those central services in the ALB sector. They will be regrouped into eight key central businesses:

NHS Blood and Transplant

NHS Litigation Authority

Appointments Commission

NHS Institute for Learning, Skills and Innovation

HSC Information Centre

National Programme for IT

NHS Business Services Authority

NHS Purchasing and Supply Authority

In 2005–06 we aim to have in place the boards and executive teams to streamline the business processes of this group of businesses and to reduce their overheads. At the same time, we will see a further dividend from the supply chain excellence programme which is already delivering better value for the local NHS by using the purchasing power of the NHS as a whole more effectively.

In 2005–06 the NHS will benefit from a minimum of £100 million in savings from more efficient procurement led by NHS PASA. By the time we get to 2007–08 we expect that procurement activities led by NHS PASA, together with other supply chain initiatives such as the recently negotiated pharmaceutical price regulation scheme, to be delivering over £800 million savings annually for use by the NHS frontline.

The Government's better regulation task force have shown the way forward in reducing the burden of regulation. Linked to this is the need to systematise more effectively the work of inspectors and reduce the burden they impose on the NHS frontline. The Government have already merged some inspectorates. The ALB review will continue this process and build on the work of the new health inspection concordat. This concordat will reduce the number of inspection days in the NHS, cut the information demands, especially through the new health and social care information centre, using more self-assessment and providing "inspection holidays" for high performing organisations. The budgets of the inspection sector will not be allowed to grow in an uncontrolled way, so that the inspection burden can be better contained than in the past. Full cost recovery will be pursued for independent sector inspection to reduce in stages the burden of their costs falling on the NHS.

Alongside cutting the inspection burden, the Government have abolished the controls assurance standards as a separate set of standards, and reporting to the centre has been stopped. Key elements of the controls assurance standards have been incorporated into the standards for better health which will enable NHS trusts to link assurance on controls directly to NHS objectives. These and other changes announced in the recent Cabinet Office report will cut the NHS burden of collating and reporting information by about 85,000 person days a year, thereby freeing up over 350 staff at the frontline for other work.

There has been much unfair criticism of the Government's use of targets. Targets have helped to save lives. Cancer mortality rates in the under 75s have fallen by 12 per cent. and coronary heart disease mortality rates in the under 75s by over 20 per cent. in less than six years. A specialist sees 99 per cent. of people with suspected cancer within 14 days—compared with only 63 per cent. seven years ago. Targets have reduced waiting times. There are now 300,000 fewer people waiting for inpatient treatment than seven years ago. And their average waiting time then was over 18 months and now it is half this. But the time has now come to reduce the number of national targets from 62 in the last planning round to around 20 for the next three years. And more targets will now be locally determined to reflect local priorities.

"Local" is where the NHS action is and will continue to be. Eight regional offices and 100 health authorities have been replaced by 28 strategic health authorities. The Department of Health's change programme has reduced the size of the centre by 38 per cent. The ALB Review will reduce the staffing of that sector by 25 per cent. But the NHS still needs good managers to run its operations and administrative and clerical staff to support doctors, nurses and other health professionals to do what they are good at—looking after patients. All these changes have not led to a growth in NHS management costs. In 2003–04 management costs were

3.7 per cent. of net NHS expenditure compared with 4.0 per cent. in 1996–97. We will keep those costs under control. The ALB Review will help us to do that by ensuring that the local NHS gets efficient, better value for money from central services, a contained regulatory and inspection system and fewer demands made on it from the centre.

Ministers are determined to secure the changes set out in this framework document within the timescales it proposes. They will be fully supported in that purpose by Sir Nigel Crisp as the accounting officer and his departmental management board, which includes the senior official responsible for seeing through this change management programme successfully.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Electoral Registration

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Spellar): In the Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002, the Government introduced a range of reforms to electoral law in Northern Ireland. These measures were aimed at addressing widespread concern that the electoral process was vulnerable to fraud. In respect of electoral registration, the Act introduced individual registration in place of the household based system, together with a new series of personal identifiers to enable checking of the register for inaccurate or fraudulent entries. In addition, the life of the register was limited to one year, with all individuals required to register during an annual canvass each autumn. The annual canvass had previously been supplemented by a system of rolling registration, allowing individuals to register at others point during the year, with updated registers published monthly and this continued.

The Government are satisfied that these measures have been extremely successful in substantially improving the accuracy of the electoral register in Northern Ireland. The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland has undertaken a substantial programme of work to make the changes a success. As a result, there are now comprehensive systems in place to check and maintain the integrity of the register.

However, there are concerns across the political spectrum that the requirement on voters to re-register and provide their personal identifiers afresh each year is leading to a downward drift in the overall numbers registered. The chief electoral officer and I share those concerns. The register published on 1 February 2004 following the 2003 annual canvass showed that 1,069,160 people, or approximately 87 per cent. of the eligible population in Northern Ireland, were registered to vote.

The Government are determined to ensure that as many people as possible both secure and use their right to vote. Our goal is an electoral register that is both as accurate and as comprehensive as possible. In the light of that, I can announce today that the Government are committed to moving away from the legal requirement for the register to be completely refreshed each year. This will reduce the burden on the individual citizen. And it will allow resources to be redirected towards targeting those groups where rates of registration are low.

However, the Government are absolutely clear that any reform must also preserve the very high level of accuracy delivered as a result of the 2002 Act. So we will be actively considering what additional security or checking measures might need to be put in place to ensure that this remains the case, to ensure that accuracy can go hand in hand with rising levels of registration.

I have discussed options with the chief electoral officer and begun consultation with the Northern Ireland political parties on a number of ideas. In due course I will also be consulting the Electoral Commission. Any changes will require primary legislation. The Government are committed to introducing legislation once consultation is complete and Parliamentary time allows, and in line with the need to ensure an orderly transition to the new system.

In the meantime, a number of steps have been taken to encourage registration at this year's annual canvass, which closed on 17 November. The chief electoral officer has ensured that electoral registration forms have been more widely available than before, in a range of locations including council offices, housing executive offices, social security offices, libraries, jobcentres and Citizens' Advice Bureaux. Forms were also made available on both the Electoral Office and Electoral Commission websites. I also understand that the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland has also been working closely with the Electoral Commission in a combined publicity and outreach programme aimed particularly at young people, including a programme of school and college visits.

The new register will be published on 1 December. The Government urges all those who have not taken the opportunity to register during the annual canvass period to take the opportunity to register through rolling registration. We will be looking with the chief electoral officer at what additional steps might be taken to encourage people to take up this opportunity.

However, in the light of the concern about falling numbers registered and the local elections due in Northern Ireland next May, the Government have decided that, if parliamentary time allows, we will legislate before then to allow the chief electoral officer to reinstitute the carry forward as a temporary measure. This would permit the CEO to reinstate the names of those individuals registered on 1 September 2004 who have not re-registered during this year's canvass so that they reappear on the first monthly register published after the legislation has been enacted.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Energy plc

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): The Government have agreed to a request from British Energy plc to extend the long stop date for completion of the company's restructuring plan beyond 31 January 2005.

In granting this extension, the Government considered their overarching objectives of nuclear safety, security of electricity supplies and value for money for the taxpayer

and consulted with the Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate. The Government continue to believe that the company's restructuring plan is the best means of ensuring these objectives. Therefore, in the light of the intermediate milestones set out in British Energy's announcement of 30 November 2004, the Government have agreed, subject to two conditions, to extend the long stop date in the Government restructuring agreement for a period of three months until 30 April 2005.

In the context of meeting its overarching objectives at this time, the Government believe that continuity and stability in the management of British Energy's business in the immediate future is desirable. We have also sought and received assurances from British Energy's management that any measures taken to manage the group's working capital will not adversely affect safety or security of supply. The extension is therefore subject to conditions relating to those two issues.

As I have said previously, contingency plans remain in place to ensure safety and security of supply if the restructuring plan fails for any reason and British Energy decides administration is the only option.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits (Fines)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On 26 April 2004 I announced that, to support the Government's efforts to restore confidence in fines as an effective component of the criminal justice system, we propose to increase the amount of the weekly deduction applied to certain benefits from £2.80 to a maximum of £5 in April 2005.

The implementation date for this measure has now been brought forward to 18 December 2004 in order to introduce this at the earliest possible opportunity. The amended regulations have been laid accordingly.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 1 December 2004

DEFENCE

Iraq (Multinational Division (South-East))

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): As part of the routine management of UK forces in the multinational division (south-east) (MND(SE)) in Iraq, we intend to conduct a roulement of forces involving the replacement of 40 Commando Royal Marines with the 2nd Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment.

The Secretary of State for Defence announced on 17 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 48, that 40 Commando would deploy to MND(SE) during June and July, both to provide support to Iraqi security forces and to provide the capacity for some other tasks, including the protection of essential infrastructure. The General Officer comanding MND(SE) has concluded that there will be a continuing requirement for these tasks beyond elections in Iraq planned for 30 January. Based on this advice, we have decided that 2nd Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment should replace 40 Commando when their six month deployment in Iraq comes to an end in January 2005.

Since 1 November, 2nd Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment has been acting as the very high readiness reserve (VHRR), at 10 days' readiness to deploy to Iraq. In January the responsibility for VHRR will pass from 2 Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment to the 1st Battalion the Royal Scots.

The roulement is currently planned to take place from early January 2005, with handover to 2nd Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment complete by mid-January. We expect that the number of armed forces personnel in theatre will remain broadly the same as a result of these changes, with the other major UK units currently in Iraq unchanged. These units are as follows:

4 Armoured Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron
The Queen's Dragoon Guards
The Royal Dragoon Guards
4th Regiment Royal Artillery
1st Battalion Scots Guards
1st Battalion Welsh Guards
1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment
21 Engineer Regiment

I would emphasise that these are routine adjustments to UK forces in MND(SE). We continue to consider, with our partners in the multinational force, the levels and dispositions of forces required in Iraq in the months ahead, to support the sovereign Interim Government of Iraq through the process leading to the election of an Iraqi Transitional Government and assembly in January 2005 and full constitutional elections in December 2005. If we judge that further changes to the UK military contribution in Iraq would be appropriate to support this process, we will of course inform the House at the earliest opportunity. At present, however, no such decision has been made.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates Revaluation

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): This statement provides the final details relating to the business rates revaluation that will take effect from 1 April 2005. It confirms the results of the consultations on proposals announced in my written statement of 21 July, *Official Report*, columns 30–33WS, gives details of the transitional relief scheme and sets out the final small business rate relief scheme. In addition it includes the provisional non-domestic rating multipliers for 2005–06 and adjustments to the thresholds for various reliefs.

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the 2005 revaluation to be accompanied by a transition scheme to lessen the effects of sudden and significant rises in rates bills. The legislation provides that the scheme must be self-financing, so that the costs do not fall on other taxpayers. In July we announced the proposal for a four-year self-financing transitional scheme with the costs of phasing in increases met by phasing down the reductions in liability for others. The scheme seeks to provide an appropriate balance between protecting those who have larger increases in rates bills and allowing those who enjoy a fall in bills to receive the full benefit as quickly as possible.

We consulted on this proposal over the summer and most respondents felt that the proposed scheme struck the right balance. The Valuation Office Agency published the draft rating lists on 1 October and the updated valuations in the draft list have resulted in the transition scheme costing less than we initially estimated. We therefore have been able to reduce the impact of the scheme on those ratepayers that are paying for it.

As a result the caps for properties experiencing increases will be 12.5 per cent., 17.5 per cent., 20 per cent. and 25 per cent. for the four years, and for small properties 5 per cent., 7.5 per cent., 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. Large properties experiencing reductions in rate bills will be capped at the rates of 12.5 per cent., 12.5 per cent., 14 per cent. and 25 per cent. For small properties, the rates are 30 per cent., 30 per cent., 35 per cent. and 60 per cent. These downward caps are significantly more generous than the consultation levels or than any previous transitional scheme. They mean that those expecting decreases in their rates bills will benefit more quickly than under earlier schemes. Also, the effect of the separate capping levels means that small businesses will only be required to make a very small contribution to the scheme.

Government recognises that the current system of business rates places a disproportionate burden on small businesses. The scheme we consulted on over the summer proposed that rate relief should be available at

50 per cent. for single properties with a rateable value up to £5,000, with relief declining in percentage terms on a sliding scale with no relief at a rateable value of £10,000. In addition we proposed a buffer zone so that eligible business properties with rateable values between £10,000 and £15,000 would not have to contribute towards the relief. The scheme is designed to be funded through a supplement on the rates bills of larger businesses.

The feedback from the consultation suggested that the eligibility criteria should be extended, that the buffer zones for London should be amended and various technical changes made to the draft regulations. We will now introduce a scheme where the ratepayer will be eligible for the relief if all their main properties fall within the appropriate threshold, and the other properties are under a rateable value of £2,200. The relief will apply to the main property only. This extends the relief to more ratepayers while not increasing the financial burden on large ratepayers or introducing complex administrative arrangements. In addition we will raise the threshold for the buffer zone in London to £21,500.

In line with the Local Government Act 2003, from 1 April 2005, there will be two multipliers, the small business non-domestic rating multiplier, which is applicable to those that qualify for the small business relief or in the buffer zone, and the non-domestic rating multiplier which includes the supplement to pay for small business relief. The small business non-domestic rating multiplier for 2005–06 is 41.5p per pound of rateable value, and the non-domestic rating multiplier is 42.2p. This means that those paying for the relief will see a 1.6 per cent. increase in rates bills as a result.

In addition we will adjust the thresholds for a variety of rate reliefs in line with the general increase in rateable values. The relief for rural single petrol stations and pubs will increase from £9,000 to £10,500, for other rural single enterprises from £6,000 to £7,000 with discretionary relief from £12,000 to £14,000. Relief for stud farms will increase from £3,000 to £3,500, former agricultural premises from £6,000 to £7,000 and small unoccupied property from £1,900 to £2,200.

Regional Spatial Strategy

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is publishing today the revised regional spatial strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber to replace RPG12 which was published in 2001.

The revised strategy follows the selective review or RPG12 carried out by the Yorkshire and Humber assembly in 2003, the public examination held in February 2004, and consultation on proposed changes July-September 2004. In response to the proposed changes, around 250 comments were received from 56 people and organisations. Nearly half of the comments were expressions of support.

The revised strategy makes significant improvements and changes to the 2001 version in the following areas:

Transport

RSS now sets out a list of transport investment and management priorities that will help achieve the overall spatial strategy, create sustainable communities and deliver economic growth.

RSS contains public transport accessibility criteria and a strategic transport demand management strategy. These should help ensue that new developments are located where they minimise the need to travel by car and that best use is made of the transport networks in the region.

Climate change

RSS now sets out a clear target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the region. It also contains policies to both help achieve this target and to help different parts of the region adapt to the effects of climate change.

Flood risk

RSS provides a clear framework for local authorities and the Environment Agency to address development and flood risk in an integrated, consistent and sustainable manner across the region.

Renewable energy

RSS now sets out targets for developments needed in different parts of the region in order to significantly increase the amount of renewable energy that can be generated.

Waste management

RSS now sets out targets for the amounts of municipal waste to be recycled/composted in different parts of the region and initial guidance on the numbers and locations of different types of waste management facilities that are likely to be needed up to 2016.

Revised RSS will be sent to the Yorkshire and Humber assembly, all of the region's MPs, MEPs and local authorities, and all those that attended the public examination in February 2004. It is available on the Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber website www.goyh.gov.uk/rpg/.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Higher Education/Courses of National Strategic Importance

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Charles Clarke): I have today asked the Higher Education Funding Council for England to advise me about higher education subjects or courses of national strategic importance, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them. I have asked for the council's views on the circumstances when such intervention might be right, and the types of intervention which it believes could be considered.

I have asked the council to consider the following subject areas:

> Arabic and Turkish language studies and other middle eastern area studies, former Soviet Union Caucasus and central Asian area studies—this is mainly for strategic security and inter-cultural awareness reasons, as highlighted by the recent BRISMES report.
>
> Japanese, Chinese, Mandarin and other far eastern languages and area studies for business and trade purposes, as highlighted by, among others, the UK-Japan 21st century group.
>
> Science, technology, engineering and mathematics—chiefly for maintaining the UK's excellent science base and ensuring our national productivity.

Vocationally oriented courses of particular interest to employers in industries that are of growing importance to the UK economy; for example, the cultural and creative industries, and e-skills.

Courses relating to recent EU accession countries, especially those in eastern Europe and the Baltic.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Over 30-Months Rule

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): Following the outbreak of BSE in this country measures were introduced to protect consumers and to eradicate BSE from the national herd. Incidences of BSE have declined in the UK in line with scientific projections.

vCJD is a dreadful disease. I and other Ministers pay tribute to the courage of the families who have been tragically affected by it. We consider the protection of the public from this devastating condition to be of paramount importance.

In 1996, when the possible link between BSE and cases of vCJD first became apparent, the then Government decided to ban the feeding of mammalian meat and bone meal to all farmed livestock; to strengthen controls on the removal of specified risk material (SRM); and to introduce the over thirty month (OTM) rule prohibiting the sale for human consumption in the UK of meat from cattle aged over 30 months at slaughter. Studies had suggested that cattle presented a much higher risk to consumers in the year before the onset of clinical disease which occurs at an average age of 5 years. The rule thus excluded higher risk cattle.

One of the main public health control measures is the removal of SRM, which is estimated to remove over 99 per cent. of infectivity in cattle.

This Government have made great efforts to control BSE in cattle. There were 186 clinical cases last year, a reduction of over 99 per cent. since the peak year of 1992 when over 37,000 clinical cases were confirmed, and a significant reduction also since 1996, when over 8,000 BSE clinical cases were confirmed. This reduction is expected to continue and DEFRA and the other Departments involved are continuing to work towards the complete eradication of BSE.

Since 1996, rapid post-mortem tests for BSE have been developed. From January 2001, throughout the EU, it became compulsory to test at slaughter all cattle aged over thirty months sold for human consumption. Other member states, where BSE emerged later, and at lower levels, do not have an OTM rule. Instead they rely on an EU-wide feed ban introduced in January 2001, SRM controls, and BSE testing. However, they have not had the high level of BSE that was present in the UK.

The OTM rule was introduced at a time when BSE posed a significant risk to UK consumers, and it has been one effective component of our wide ranging BSE controls. The risk is now greatly reduced and very low, although no risk can ever be completely eliminated.

In year 2000 the FSA was set up as an independent agency to advise Ministers on issues of food and consumer safety.

In July 2004, that agency advised Ministers that, subject to putting a robust testing regime in place, it would now be acceptable to replace the OTM rule with BSE testing for OTM cattle born after July 1996. The science of vCJD remains highly imprecise, and for this reason it is impossible to be precise about the risks; but the estimates are based on conservative current assumptions. The FSA risk assessment, with valuable input from the independent Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC), concluded that it would be consistent on the basis of the risk involved for Government to lift the OTM rule if a robust testing system was in place.

In April 2004 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) had already agreed that

the United Kingdom's BSE risk status should be reduced from "high" to "moderate", the same as most other EU countries, later this year;

that the UK was clearly already moderate risk in respect of cattle born after 31 July 1996; and

that for such cattle the OTM rule could be replaced by the same protective measures presently adopted in other moderate risk countries.

UK Government Ministers, the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government have agreed today to announce the start of a managed transition towards the lifting of the OTM rule.

It is essential to establish a robust and independently quality-assured testing regime, taking account of the significant recent failures in the existing testing regime. The main public health protection measure—the removal of specified risk material—has been and will continue to be rigorously enforced by the meat hygiene service.

I believe it is responsible for the Government to proceed cautiously. A further process of stakeholder engagement will now take place, which will include key Government advisers, such as the FSA and the chief medical officer.

A final switch-over from the OTM rule to BSE testing will happen only when the Agency has advised Ministers that the testing regime is robust. This change, when introduced, would bring the UK into line with the arrangements which apply throughout the EU, except that UK cattle born before August 1996 would remain permanently excluded from the food chain.

I and other Ministers have also agreed that the Food Standards Agency should be responsible for the on-going audit and review of the testing system. This role in relation to testing will be in addition to the agency's continuing responsibility, as an independent body set up to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food, for monitoring developments and advising Government on the scientific evidence on the food-borne BSE risk to consumers. In advising on the robustness of testing, the agency will be assisted by a group of independent experts which includes experts in food safety and consumer affairs. This group will take into account recent failings in current testing arrangements, including in relation to casualty cattle.

The FSA will be conducting a full public consultation on draft legislation to replace the OTM rule by testing for OTM cattle born after July 1996.

The timing of any changeover would be dependent on the agency advising Ministers that it is satisfied that the testing regime is robust and on other matters such as the outcome of the consultation, amendments to legislation and the recruitment of additional meat hygiene service staff. Testing arrangements are not yet properly quality assured. This is a source of concern and therefore further work is necessary to ensure the testing regime is robust. This is expected to take until the latter half of next year in Great Britain. Given the recent more favourable European Commission report on the testing system in Northern Ireland, I do not rule out earlier change there.

Ministers have also agreed that it would be desirable for the ban on OTM imports to be lifted at the same time as the domestic OTM Rule, and that every effort should be made to accelerate the lifting of the EU restrictions on UK beef exports. Before export restrictions can be eased, there will need to be a further inspection visit from the EU's food and veterinary office to check our BSE controls and our testing arrangements, a proposal from the European Commission to amend EU legislation, and agreement by other EU member states. This is likely to take until late next year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Côte d'Ivoire

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): With the support of Her Majesty's Government, the United Nations Security Council on 15 November unanimously adopted resolution 1572 (2004) imposing an arms embargo against Côte d'Ivoire, effective for 13 months, following violations of the cease fire by Government forces. The embargo includes humanitarian exemptions, exemptions for the United Nations operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the French forces who support them and for States engaged in the evacuation of their nationals or those for whom they have consular responsibility in Côte d'Ivoire. There is also an exemption to allow support for the process of restructuring Ivorian defence and security forces.

Resolution 1572 (2004) also imposes a travel ban and assets freeze against all who constitute a threat to the peace and national reconciliation process in Côte d'Ivoire, which will come into effect on 15 December unless the Security Council decides that the signatories concerned have fully implemented their commitments under the Accra III Agreement and are embarked towards full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. I will inform the House if the travel ban and assets freeze come into force.

Equatorial Guinea

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): My answer to the question from the right hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) of 17 November, *Official Report*, column 1548W, set out what HM Government knew of reports of a planned coup in Equatorial Guinea earlier this year. This statement informs the House more widely of the position. At all times we acted properly, promptly, and entirely in accordance with international law.

The United Kingdom has normal diplomatic relations with the Government of Equatorial Guinea, which is a former Spanish colony. We have no embassy in the country. Our high commissioner in neighbouring Cameroon is accredited as ambassador to Equatorial Guinea and has responsibility for relations with Equatorial Guinea. There is a British community of some hundreds, many involved in the energy sector. We have an honorary consul and a commercial attaché in the capital, Malabo.

The country has in the past suffered political instability. Rumours of upheaval and further instability are common. For example there were reports picked up by BBC monitoring in October 2003 of an imminent planned coup. These appeared not to be accurate; certainly, there was no coup.

On 29 January this year the Foreign Office received an intelligence report of preparations for a possible coup in Equatorial Guinea. The report was the first intelligence we had received. It was not definitive enough for us to conclude that a coup was likely or inevitable. It was passed by another Government to us on the normal condition that it not be passed on. There were, coincidentally, reports on Spanish radio, and in both *El Pais* and *El Mundo* on 30 January, making similar suggestions that a coup was being planned in Equatorial Guinea, and reporting that Spanish naval vessels were sailing towards the country.

British newspapers have this week reported that a South African national, Johann Smith, is claiming to have passed to contacts in British intelligence in December 2003 and in January 2004 a note setting out in detail plans for a coup. We have no record of this information being passed to British officials at any time before May 2004.

I received a submission, dated 30 January, from FCO officials on the weekend of 30 January-1 February which summarised both the media and intelligence reports and made recommendations to me. I considered the case and agreed that the FCO should approach an individual formerly connected with a British private military company, mentioned in the report of 29 January, both to attempt to test the veracity of the report, and to make clear that the FCO was firmly opposed to any unconstitutional action such as coups d'etat. A senior Foreign Office official did so within days. The individual concerned claimed no knowledge of the plans.

On 3 February we changed our travel advice to reflect our latest assessment. This reads "visitors should expect . . . isolated incidents of political unrest" in Equatorial Guinea, particularly as "legislative elections are scheduled for the first quarter of 2004".

In anticipation of these elections our ambassador in Yaounde was due to visit Malabo in early February. We instructed him to continue with his planned visit. He found the situation calm. But as a precaution, our consular crisis plan for Equatorial Guinea was reviewed. Given our limited British representation, it had not been recently updated

We did not pass the report of 29 January to the Equatorial Guinea Government. It had been passed to us on the condition that it not be passed on to any third party. But there were two considerations of

substance which led us to this judgement in any event. First, because there had been media reports about preparations for a possible coup which the Equatorial Guinea government would already have seen. Second, because it was not definitive enough for us to conclude that a coup was likely or inevitable. Indeed, we went back to the originating government and to another Government which had also received the report to check their belief in the veracity of the report. Their responses gave no certainty. The fact that the rumours were in the public domain suggested in any event that a successful coup was growing less likely.

There have been some suggestions in the press that the British Government were under a legal obligation to act differently. We do not condone or support unconstitutional action including coup d'etat of any kind in other countries. But my understanding is that governments are under no legal obligation to pass on information which they may receive about such possible action.

On 9 March we learned that the Zimbabwean authorities had arrested a number of individuals in Harare, alleged to be on their way to effect a coup in Equatorial Guinea. A number of individuals were also arrested in Malabo in connection with the alleged coup plot. Over the following months, the names of a number of others allegedly involved appeared in the media.

On 28 August the Foreign Office press office was asked by The Observer if the Government knew before March that a coup was going to happen. It replied, correctly, that the FCO did not. As I told the right hon. Member for Devizes on 9 November I had first heard reports of possible coup planning in late January this year. And this I followed up with a fuller account for the House in my answer to the right hon. Member's questions on 17 November.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Closure of Solihull Asylum Screening Unit

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Des Browne): In the Government's view, applications for asylum should be made at the earliest possible opportunity after arrival in this country. Staff at ports of entry are trained to receive such claims when made by arriving passengers. There are also currently three screening units at which applications by people already in the country can be received.

Over the last 18 months, there has been a significant reduction in the number of claims. There is also a case for concentrating expertise in dealing with such cases. The asylum screening unit at Solihull currently deals with fewer than 5 per cent. of asylum applications and I have therefore decided that it should close with effect from 3 December. This change is part of the Government's continuing strategy to tighten up management of the asylum system and to take effective action against abuse of the asylum process.

Our experience in Croydon ASU has shown that by providing a more streamlined and focussed service to asylum applicants those who are genuine can be identified more quickly, whilst those whose claims have no foundation are dealt with more effectively.

Those wishing to seek asylum and already in the country will be able to do so at one of the other screening units at Croydon and Liverpool. Vulnerable applicants, such as unaccompanied children, families, pregnant women and those with medical problems will continue to be able to register their claims at immigration service locations throughout the United Kingdom.

The closure of the Solihull Asylum Screening Unit will free up staff in such a way as to make more effective the reporting arrangements for existing asylum seekers in the West Midlands. Our partners in local government and the voluntary sector have been informed of these changes.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 2 December 2004

TREASURY

Financial Services and Markets Act 2000

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Stephen Timms): A paper giving details of the outcome of the two-year review of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, which the former Financial Secretary to the Treasury announced on 4 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 28WS, is available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House, and is accessible on: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

National Insurance Contributions 2005–06

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): I have completed the annual review under section 141 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992. I propose the following changes to take effect from 6 April 2005. These rates and limits will also apply to national insurance contributions in Northern Ireland.

Employers and Employees

In line with the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, the lower earnings limit for primary Class 1 contributions is to be raised to £82 a week. It is set at the level of the basic state pension for a single person from April 2005 and rounded down to the nearest pound.

The primary and secondary thresholds for Class 1 contributions will continue to be aligned with the weekly amount of the income tax personal allowance, which will be increased to £4,895 from April 2005. The primary and secondary thresholds will therefore be increased to £94 a week. This means that no tax or Class 1 contributions will actually be paid on earnings below this level.

The upper earnings limit for primary Class 1 contributions will be raised to £630.

The self-employed

The rate of Class 2 contributions will be raised to £2.10 a week. Self-employed people with earnings below the annual small earnings exception can apply to be exempted from paying Class 2 contributions. This limit will be raised by £130 to £4,345 in line with inflation.

The annual lower profits limit for liability to Class 4 contributions will increase to £4,895 a year (in line with the income tax personal allowance). The upper profits limit will increase by £1,040 to £32,760, to maintain the link with employees' earnings liable to Class 1 contributions.

Class 3

The rate of Class 3 voluntary contributions will be increased by 20 pence to £7.35 a week.

Share fishermen

The special rate of Class 2 contributions for share fishermen, which allows them to build entitlement to contributory Jobseeker's Allowance in addition to the other contributory benefits available to the self-employed, will be increased to £2.75 a week.

Volunteer Development Workers

The special rate of Class 2 contributions for volunteer development workers, which entitles them to the full range of contributory benefits, will be increased by 15 pence to £4.10 in line with the statutory formula of 5 per cent of the primary Class 1 lower earnings limit.

Treasury Grant

I need to ensure that the Fund can maintain a prudent working balance throughout the coming year and, in accordance with section 2 (2) of the Social Security Act 1993, I propose to do so by prescribing that the maximum Treasury Grant which may be made available to the Fund in 2005–06 shall not exceed 2 per cent of the estimated benefit expenditure for that year. Similar provision will be made in respect of the Northern Ireland National Insurance Fund.

I shall be laying a draft re-rating order before Parliament in due course. This will accompany a report by the Government Actuary to myself and my Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which we shall jointly present to Parliament.

The following table sets out the rates, earnings limits and thresholds for National Insurance Contributions proposed for 2005–06.

National insurance contributions, proposed re-rating, April 2005

Item	*2005–06*
Lower earnings limit, primary Class 1	£82
Upper earnings limit, primary Class 1	£630
Primary threshold	£94
Secondary threshold	£94
Employees' primary Class 1 rate	11% from £94.01 to £630 plus 1% above £630
Employees' contracted-out rebate	1.6%
Married women's reduced rate	4.85% from £94.01 to £630 plus 1% above £630
Employers' secondary Class 1 rate	12.8% on earnings above £94
Employers' contracted-out rebate, salary-related schemes	3.5%
Employers' contracted-out rebate, money-purchase schemes	1.0%
Class 2 rate	£2.10
Class 2 small earnings exception	£4,345
Special Class 2 rate for share fishermen	£2.75
Special Class 2 rate for volunteer development workers	£4.10
Class 3 rate	£7.35

National insurance contributions, proposed re-rating, April 2005

Item	*2005–06*
Class 4 rate	8% from £4,895 to £32,760 plus 1% above £32,760
Class 4 lower profits limit	£4,895
Class 4 upper profits limit	£32,760

Private Finance Initiative Information

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Paul Boateng): Enclosed below are the latest figures reported by Departments on their Private Finance Initiative (PFI) activities. The submission of this information is in accordance with Departments' obligation to disclose PFI information to Parliament on a biannual basis.

Table 1 shows the estimated private sector investment in public services resulting from signed PFI contracts over the period 2004–05 to 2006–07.

Table 2 shows the estimated total capital value of PFI contracts that are currently at the Preferred Bidder stage of procurement. Tables 1 and 2 are both presented on a departmental basis.

Table 3 shows a forecast of the estimated payments for services flowing from signed PFI projects. It should be noted that procuring authorities only pay when they receive the high quality services specified in PFI contracts. If such services are not received then deductions can be made from anticipated payments. This table is presented in aggregate form and covers the period 2004–05 to 2029–30.

Table 1: Departmental Estimate of Capital Spending by the Private Sector (signed deals)[1, 2]

Department	*Projections (£ millions) 2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
Education and Skills[3, 4]	87	4	1
Health	556	689	476
Transport[5, 6]	1,450	1,497	1,411
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	54	55	101
Home Office	104	6	0
Constitutional Affairs	33	29	8
Defence	865	458	304
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	6	5	5
Trade and Industry	5	5	2
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	69	46	24
Work and Pensions	41	44	34
Scotland	172	78	7
Wales	58	18	0
Northern Ireland Executive	2	4	16
Chancellor's Departments	46	38	34
Cabinet Office	6	1	0
Culture, Media and Sport	5	13	9
Total	3,559	2,990	2,432

[1] Investment in assets scored on the public sector balance sheet also scores as public sector net investment. Figures are for investment under PFI-type contracts only.

[2] PFI activity in local authority projects is included under the sponsoring central government department.

[3] Excludes private finance activity in educational institutions classified to the private sector.

[4] Figures reported for non-IT projects relate to the amount of PFI credits awarded.

[5] Includes estimates of the capital expenditure for the London Underground Limited (LUL) Public Private Partnership PFI Contracts in the years that investments are expected to take place.

[6] Excludes estimates of capital expenditure on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL).

Table 2: Estimated Aggregated Capital Value of Projects at Preferred Bidder Stage

Department	*Projections (£ millions) 2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
Education and Skills[7]	870	0	0
Health	1,613	1,200	0
Transport	28	0	0
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	35	60	55
Home Office	91	26	0
Constitutional Affairs	0	0	0
Defence	378	106	198
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	0	0	0
Trade and Industry	0	0	0
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	0	0	0
Work and Pensions	0	0	0
Scotland	183	203	224
Wales	5	57	0
Northern Ireland Executive	50	32	20
Chancellor's Departments	0	0	0
Cabinet Office	0	0	0
Culture, Media and Sport	46	33	11
Total	3,299	1,717	508

[7] Figures reported relate to the amount of PFI credits awarded.

Table 3: Estimated Payments under PFI Contracts—December 2004 (signed deals)[8]

Year	*Projections (£ billions)*	*Year*	*Projections (£ billions)*
2004–05	5.7	2017–18	5.9
2005–06	6.2	2018–19	3.9
2006–07	6.6	2019–20	3.9
2007–08	6.6	2020–21	4.0
2008–09	6.4	2021–22	3.7
2009–10	6.5	2022–23	3.8
2010–11	6.4	2023–24	3.8
2011–12	6.3	2024–25	3.7
2012–13	6.3	2025–26	3.7
2013–14	6.3	2026–27	3.4
2014–15	6.2	2027–28	3.2
2015–16	6.3	2028–29	2.9
2016–17	6.3	2029–30	2.6

[8] The figures between 2004–05 and 2017–18 include estimated payments for the LUL PPP contracts. These contracts contain periodic reviews every 7.5 years and therefore the service payments are not fixed after 2009–10.

Finance Bill

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): This Government are determined to ensure that all employers and employees pay the proper amount of tax and NICs on the rewards of employment, however those rewards are delivered. Despite the efforts of successive Governments of all persuasions over several years, we continue to be presented with ever more complex and contrived attempts to avoid paying tax and NICs on rewards from employment, particularly in relation to bonuses in the City.

In the most recent year for which we have figures, well-rewarded individuals receiving bonuses of at least £1.5 billion in total sought to avoid paying their fair share of tax and NICs.

The disclosure rules in Finance Act 2004 have revealed that this kind of avoidance is still rife. Without prompt and decisive action we think there could be up to £2 billion paid this year in bonuses on which the amount of tax and NICs properly due is at risk, as a result of increasing ingenuity and inventiveness of the tax avoidance industry.

We cannot allow avoidance on this scale to continue. It is only right that everyone who should pay tax and NICs, does pay and that they pay their fair share when it is due. The overwhelming majority of employers and employees do pay their fair share. But for too long some employers and employees with the benefit of sophisticated tax advice have sought to avoid their responsibilities and to pass more of a burden onto the rest of us.

Early attempts at avoidance in this area took the form of paying bonuses and salaries in gold bullion, diamonds and fine wines. When these routes were closed, employers started to pay bonuses through shares and share options to reduce the amount of NICs they had to pay, avoid their obligation to operate PAYE, and reduce employees' tax bills. When, in 1998, assets readily convertible into cash were brought within PAYE, and NICs, avoidance schemes moved on to more complex arrangements.

Despite extensive reforms to the tax legislation in 2003, employers and their advisers are continuing to devise and operate ever more contrived avoidance schemes. One such example of which Inland Revenue has learnt involves payment of a bonus to an employee in the form of dividends on shares in a specially constructed company. This avoids tax at 40 per cent. and employer and employee NICs.

The Inland Revenue will be challenging such arrangements in the courts where it is appropriate to do so. We cannot however await the outcome in the courts before taking action. We intend that from today both tax and NICs legislation should achieve our objective of subjecting the rewards of employment to the proper amount of tax and NICs, however the rewards are delivered. Taxpayers who contribute their fair share have a right to expect that others will also do so. We also want to make it plain that to the extent that legislation may still not achieve our objective in the face of continuing avoidance, we will ensure it does.

To that end we will be including legislation in FB 05, effective from today, to close down the avoidance schemes we know about. A technical note explaining what we intend to do in FB 05 will be published today. We will also ensure that NICs is charged on these schemes with effect from today.

However, experience has taught us that we are not always able to anticipate the ingenuity and inventiveness of the avoidance industry. Nor should we have to. Our objective is clear and the time has come to close this activity down permanently.

I am therefore giving notice of our intention to deal with any arrangements that emerge in future designed to frustrate our intention that employers and employees should pay the proper amount of tax and NICs on the rewards of employment. Where we become aware of arrangements which attempt to frustrate this intention we will introduce legislation to close them down, where necessary from today.

This action will not affect employers and employees who organise their affairs in a straightforward and ordinary way—the vast majority. In particular, genuine employee share schemes and share option plans will not be affected. We continue to believe these make an important contribution to the Government's productivity agenda.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

National Non-Domestic Rates (2005–06)

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): I have today presented the provisional local government finance settlement for 2005–06. Included in the announcement was the distributable amount of national non-domestic rates in England for 2005–06 to be redistributed to local authorities, which will be £18.000 billion.

Calculation of Distributable Amount for 2005–06

£ million

	2001–02 Outturn	*2002–03 Outturn*	*2003–04 Provisional outturn*	*2004–05 Provisional outturn*	*2005–06 Estimated contribution*
1. Income from local lists					
Multiplier (p)	43.0	43.7	44.4	45.6	41.5
Gross rate yield in respect of current year	16,952	17,195	17,322	17,880	19,468
(i) Reliefs					
(a) Net Transitional Relief	−493	−182	−119	−98	0
(b) Empty or partly occupied properties	−1,049	−1,144	−1,228	−1,244	−1,355
(c) Charitable	−583	−602	−616	−636	−692
(d) Rural shops and post offices	−5	−6	−6	−6	−7
(e) Community amateur sports clubs	—	—	—	−4	−5
(f) Former agricultural premises	0	0	0	−1	−1
(g) Discretionary	−43	−42	−39	−38	−41
Net rate yield in respect of current year after reliefs	14,777	15,220	15,315	15,853	17,368
(ii) Collection costs and other reductions to contributions					
(a) Costs of collection	−84	−84	−84	−84	−84
(b) Losses on collection	−95	−106	−88	−114	−124
(c) City of London offset	−7	−7	−7	0	0

Calculation of Distributable Amount for 2005–06

£ million

	2001–02 Outturn	*2002–03 Outturn*	*2003–04 Provisional outturn*	*2004–05 Provisional outturn*	*2005–06 Estimated contribution*
Total contribution in respect of current year	14,592	15,024	15,136	15,655	17,160
(iii) Prior year adjustments					
(a) Interest on repayments	−70	−59	−78	−40	−31
(b) Repayments	−270	−479	−774	−448	−345
Net rate yield from local lists	14,252	14,485	14,284	15,167	16,784
2. Income from Central list					
Net central list yield	1,048	1,044	1,029	1,037	1,114
3. Income from the former Crown list					
Contributions in lieu of rates	12	8	10	10	10
Total yield	15,312	15,537	15,323	16,214	17,908
4. Exchequer Contributions					
Exchequer contribution towards transitional relief	262	41	111	59	0
Total NNDR pool payments (= 1+2+3+4)	15,574	15,578	15,434	16,273	17,908
5. Adjustments					
Surplus brought forward	−305	133	−915	−1,081	193
Combined total	15,270	15,711	14,519	15,193	18,100
Distributable amount	15,136	16,626	15,600	15,000	
Surplus carried forward	133	−915	−1,081	193	

Notes to the table:

The above calculation involves estimating several figures that are inherently difficult to forecast accurately, such as the gross rate yield and the prior year adjustments. The resulting figure of £18.100 billion has therefore been rounded to £18.000 billion exactly to avoid spurious accuracy.

For 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04, the amounts shown are generally those reported on the outturn (NNDR3) returns, with those for 2003–04 being regarded as provisional in advance of the receipt of audited returns. For 2004–05, the amounts shown are the provisional outturn for the year based upon authorities' provisional contributions to the non-domestic rating pool, as reported on NNDR1 returns. For 2005–06 figures, the estimates are based on:

1. *Item 1:* The gross rate yield represents the estimated effective total rateable value of non-domestic hereditaments on local rating lists multiplied by the small business non-domestic rating multiplier of 41.5p. The supplement of 0.7p that is also applied to businesses paying for the new small business rate relief is not included, and neither is the small business rate relief included within the reliefs at item l(i). This reflects the fact that the income from the supplement is intended to equal the cost of the relief nationally, resulting in a zero net effect upon the Distributable Amount.
2. *Item 1(i)(a):* The cost of the transitional reliefs in 2004–05 is estimated to be zero, to reflect the fact the scheme is designed to be self-financing, through phasing in reductions to rate bills.
3. *Item 1(i)(b):* The empty property relief adjustments include voids and partially occupied hereditaments. The 2005–06 figure includes an allowance to reflect the increase in the gross rate yield.
4. *Item 1(i)(c):* Charitable rate relief. The 2005–06 figure includes an allowance to reflect the increase in the gross rate yield.
5. *Item 1(i)(d):* Rural Shops and Post Office relief. Figures include mandatory relief for general stores and post offices under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. The 2005–06 figure includes an allowance to reflect the increase in the gross rate yield.
6. *Item 1(i)(e):* Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs). This is mandatory rate relief for sports clubs registered with the Inland Revenue as Community Amateur Sports Clubs under Section 64 of the Local Government Act 2003, which came into effect on 1 April 2004. The 2005–06 figure includes an allowance to reflect the increase in the gross rate yield.
7. *Item 1(i)(f):* Discretionary relief granted to charities, non-profit making organisations and for other reasons including discretionary relief for village shops and post offices under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. The 2005–06 figure includes an allowance to reflect the increase in the gross rate yield.
8. *Item 1(ii)(a) and (b):* The allowances for the costs and losses incurred by authorities in collecting non-domestic rates from ratepayers.
9. *Item 1(ii)(c):* City Offset—the amount which the City of London is not required to pay into the non-domestic rating pool. It has been set to zero for 2004–05 onwards.
10. *Item 1(iii):* Net adjustment in respect of appeals and other amendments to the rating list affecting liability for previous years rates settled in that year: comprising repayments and associated interest payments.
11. *Item 2:* the rateable value of non-domestic hereditaments on the central rating list multiplied by the multiplier, less the net effect of transitional arrangements, and adjusted for appeals and other changes in respect of previous years.
12. *Item 3:* Almost all properties previously included in the Crown List are included in the local list figures at item 1.
13. *Item 4:* the contribution from central government to offset the amount of the Secretary of State's estimate of income foregone as a result of transitional arrangements is assumed to be zero for 2005–06, given the self-financing nature of the transitional relief scheme.

Supporting People

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): The Government are today announcing the allocation to administering authorities of £1.715 billion for the Supporting People programme in 2005–06. These grants are awarded to authorities to enable them to provide housing related services to over 1.2 million vulnerable people in our society.

The Supporting People programme was successfully launched in April 2003. Since then authorities have made good progress in managing the programme but there is work still to do. Findings from an independent review, inspections by the Audit Commission, and other research work have shown that there are considerable opportunities for authorities to make efficiency savings in their programme and that some services are not delivering the quality of support that clients deserve.

We are addressing these concerns by requiring authorities to complete reviews of individual services by April 2006 and ensure that these are value for money, good quality and strategically relevant. In partnership with local stakeholders, authorities are developing five-year strategies for their programmes and these will examine critically the services delivered and focus them on local need and strategic priorities.

Additionally, we are providing help and advice through capacity building programmes, and monitoring and support to authorities and providers. This includes projects to develop and disseminate best practice, a benchmarking programme, web-based support through hub services, and support to authorities struggling with their administration of the programme. We will also continue to work with authorities and providers to ensure that administration of the programme is effective and does not create unnecessary burdens.

As a preventive programme, Supporting People contributes to a range of key Government targets and objectives. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be working closely with colleagues across Government to ensure that the Supporting People programme is better integrated with other support packages.

Throughout 2005–06, we will be developing the monitoring arrangements for the programme including measuring performance against three key Supporting People performance indicators. We will use this data to establish baseline performance and will then look to authorities to deliver continued improvement in outcomes over time.

Early next year we will consult on the revised needs based distribution formula which will provide the basis for allocating Supporting People grant in the future. In the long run this could give rise to significant changes in current pattern of allocations between authorities and I recognise this cannot be achieved quickly. We have previously announced that under the Spending Review 2004 settlement the funding for Supporting People in 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be around £1.7 billion. To provide some further assurance to authorities about the pace of change I have decided that no authority should face a reduction of funding of more than 5 per cent. or an increase of more than 10 per cent. in either of these years.

This Government's on-going commitment to the Supporting People programme and our continued support to authorities and other stakeholders in the delivery of the programme will ensure the continued improvement in value for money and better use of resources in 2005–06 and beyond.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also beginning today a consultation on the grant conditions for Supporting People in 2005–06, which we are proposing to keep broadly the same as 2004–05. The consultation ends on 11 February 2005. We are writing to local authorities to inform them of their allocations.

GLA Grant

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has today announced the following three-year settlement for the general GLA grant, which is provided by the Government to support the activities of the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority. This settlement reflects the overall 2004 spending review settlement for local government and in particular the requirement to generate efficiency savings of 2.5 per cent. per annum across the public sector. The actual grant will continue to be determined by the Secretary of State annually, in accordance with section 100 of the GLA Act 1999.

Year	*£m*
2005–06	27,493
2006–07	37,868
2007–08	38,243

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Teenage Pregnancy

The Minister for Children Young People and Families (Margaret Hodge): The Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy has published its third annual report today, 2 December 2004.

This is a very thorough and considered report which continues to build on the group's previous two annual reports. We commend the Independent Advisory Group for the notable contribution it has made since it was formed. We welcome the advisory group's acknowledgement of the significant progress made to date nationally, regionally and locally on implementing our teenage pregnancy strategy. We recognise that we are at a critical point of this 10-year strategy, the goals of which can only be achieved by sustaining the drive and energy we have demonstrated so far. Our continued commitment to addressing this key inequality and public health issue is signalled by our PSA jointly held with the Department of Health. Reducing teenage pregnancies and supporting young parents is central to our change for children programme with its aim of improving the life chances for all young people. The report contains eight recommendations on potential areas for further action. Each recommendation will receive our full and careful consideration and a detailed Government response will be published by March 2005.

A copy of the Independent Advisory Group's third annual report has been placed in the Library.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Catchment-Sensitive Farming

The Minister for the Environment and Agri-environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): The joint Defra—HM Treasury consultation "Developing Measures to Promote Catchment-Sensitive Farming" sought views on the broad possible approaches and measures (including regulatory, voluntary and economic measures) to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture. The

consultation, which closed on 9 September 2004, stressed the need for action to further improve water quality and to help meet the requirements of domestic and international targets including the water framework directive. It also suggested that a package of different measures likely to be needed.

Respondents to the consultation expressed a variety of views across the range of possible measures. A detailed analysis of responses is available on the Defra website www.defra.gov.uk/. In brief: there was broad support for the concept of a package of measures; many respondents suggested a potential role for regulation as a means for targeting catchments that are particularly environmentally sensitive or where there is a particular problem from diffuse water pollution from agriculture; views were divided on the use of economic instruments; and voluntary and awareness-raising measures were generally strongly supported. The Government are today publishing a summary of responses to the consultation.

The Government, having carefully considered all consultation responses, have decided to continue to work with stakeholders to promote voluntary action on the ground, to increase awareness and to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach, whilst continuing to refine the evidence base, for example to take into account the potential impacts of CAP reform. The Government will also continue to actively work with stakeholders in 2005 to develop an effective package of measures for tackling diffuse water pollution and will consult further on this in due course.

In developing policy options, we will be mindful of cumulative economic and administrative impacts on farmers and growers. Our aim is to keep any measures as light touch and as closely targeted as possible.

A parallel announcement has been made today by the Chancellor in the Pre-Budget Report.

Defra 2004 Autumn Performance Report

The Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality (Alun Michael): The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' 2004 Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6396), which highlights progress towards achieving the Department's outstanding Public Service Agreement targets since the publication of the Departmental Report in April, has been published today. Copies have been placed in both Libraries of the House.

HEALTH

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): The next meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will be on 6 and 7 December. Items on the agenda relating to health will be covered on 6 December.

Items for discussion are: a co-ordinated approach to combat HIV/AIDS in the European Union and its neighbourhood; European Commission proposals for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medicinal products for paediatric use; and the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on nutrition and health claims made on foods.

I will attend for the United Kingdom.

Health Ministers will have a public debate on HIV/AIDS, where they will be asked to focus on next steps for both European Community and national level action.

This will be followed by a first council discussion of the European Commission proposal on paediatric medicines, which aims to encourage the development of medicines for children. There will be a presentation by the European Commission, followed by interventions from some member states.

There will be an exchange of views on the proposal to regulate health and nutritional claims on food labelling. Discussion will be structured around the Dutch presidency questions on the key issue of nutrient profiling, the proposed method to identify foods or categories of foods which will be permitted to make claims.

Ministers will be asked to adopt the draft council conclusions on a European response to emerging zoonotic diseases. The UK can agree to adopt these conclusions as currently drafted.

Under any other business, the Dutch presidency will report on progress made to establish the council's public health working party meeting on a high official level, which had its first meeting on 23 November 2004.

The European Commission will also present the interim report of the high level group on health care and medical services.

At lunch on 6 December, Health Ministers will also discuss pandemic preparedness planning.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Independent Race Monitor

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has today placed in the Library of each House his response to the second annual report produced under section 19E of the Race Relations Act 1976 by Mary Coussey, the Independent Race Monitor, which was placed in the Library of both Houses in July. The Race Monitor has a statutory duty to report to Parliament via the Home Secretary on ministerial authorisations made under section 19D of the Race Relations Act enabling immigration staff to discriminate on the basis of nationality or ethnic or national origin in the exercise of their functions.

Home Office Autumn Performance Report 2004

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett): The Home Office autumn performance report 2004 has been published today by command of Her Majesty. Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and in the Library. The report is also available on the Home Office website.

The report sets out the progress we have made towards achieving our public service agreement targets.

The report shows we have made significant progress. Crime has fallen dramatically and people's fear is following suit. Police performance is improving and the justice gap is continuing to narrow. Our correctional services are operating effectively, we have expanded drug treatment and asylum is increasingly under control. Our work to increase race equality and community engagement is beginning to show real results: there are now 1.6 million more volunteers than in 2001, and more black and minority ethnic police officers than ever before.

Police Grant (England and Wales)

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I have today placed in the Library a copy of the Home Secretary's proposals for allocation of police grant for England and Wales in 2005–06. The Home Secretary and I intend to implement the proposals subject to consideration of any representations and to the approval of the House.

This Government are continuing to deliver on law and order. Our programme of reform and improvement for the police service in England and Wales over the past four years has been matched by a significant increase in resources for policing. On a like for like basis, expenditure on policing supported by Government grant or spent centrally on services for the police has increased by 39 per cent. or over £3.0 billion between 2000–01 and 2005–06. This substantial increase has helped to both support the reform agenda and deliver the things that we all want to see. Crime is down and there are record numbers of police officers, police staff and community support officers.

We have recently set out our programme for further change. On 9 November we published "*Building Communities, Beating Crime: A Better Police Service for the 21st Century*". This is an ambitious agenda for sustainable improvement in policing. We are aiming for the spread of neighbourhood policing, with improved responsiveness and customer service; further modernisation of the police workforce to ensure that the service is fully equipped and able to deliver these changes; and greater involvement of communities and citizens in determining how their communities are policed. We are committed to working with the service, police authorities and their partner agencies in delivering safer communities across our country.

The national policing plan for 2005–08 was published on 24 November. This too puts the law abiding citizen at the heart of policing, with the police working in partnership to create and maintain secure and confident communities. Our key priorities are to reduce overall crime; provide a citizen-focused police service; take action with partners to increase sanction detection rates; reduce people's concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour; combat serious and organised crime and counter the increased risk from terrorism.

The police funding settlement will support the priorities outlined in the Plan. The police will receive sufficient resources to enable them to provide an efficient and effective service to the public. We have listened very carefully to the concerns raised by the policing community. The Association of Police Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers made available their own surveys of projected cost increases for 2005–06. These have been taken into account in determining Government increases in grant.

Total provision for policing to be supported by grant in 2005–06 will be £11,833 million. Central Government revenue grant funding direct to police forces will increase by 5.1 per cent. This includes an increase of 4.8 per cent. in total formula grant and more than £760 million in specific grants. Taken together with the increase in central funding for police communications, IT and support services, this provides an increase in supported spending of 6.7 per cent. overall.

The overall 6.7 per cent. increase or £746 million includes police formula grants, specific grants, capital related grants, direct Home Office spending and the formula spending on which revenue support grant is based. It also includes counter-terrorism and security, and international and organised crime funding.

For formula grant, the Home Secretary and I have added £194 million in Home Office Police Grant to last year's general police grant provision. There has also been an increase of £156 million in Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates from ODPM and the Welsh Assembly. This will give police authorities maximum scope to determine their own spending and help authorities manage down financial pressures next year. This extra money has enabled us to increase police formula grant by 4.8 per cent. in 2005–06.

Last year we took the exceptional decision to provide a broadly standard rate increase in general grants in recognition of the financial pressures on all authorities. This year we will again provide a minimum increase for all police authorities but we have been able to return to a better reflection of the funding formula. The settlement provides a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. This will benefit 26 police authorities who under application of the formula without damping would have received £103.6 million less. Increases for other authorities, above the funding floor, range up to nearly 6.9 per cent. This approach balances financial protection for all police authorities with distribution of additional resources to areas where need is greater. Above-floor increases will help authorities facing rapid population growth and those that have faced ceiling restrictions in the past.

The minimum increase of 3.75 per cent. in general grants is substantially above police pay increases and inflation. Police Authorities, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of Police Authorities have impressed upon me the particular pressures they face in the coming year. I am responding to their concerns with what is one of the highest police settlements in recent years. To help meet those pressures, particularly on police pensions, police grant overall and the floor level include a special 0.25 per cent uplift, around £20m that would not otherwise have been provided. I do not intend to claw back the £20m in future years, but equally we will not take it into account when calculating grant increases in 2006–2007. The effect will be that grant increases in 2006–2007 will be calculated as increases on a baseline from which the 0.25 per cent. uplift has been removed.

Pressures on policing change over time and the way in which we assess police authorities' relative need for grant support has to develop. As the National Policing Plan 2005–08 explains, we are reviewing the formula that underpins police grant, in association with the service.

We are examining the factors that drive demands on the police and will take account of those factors at local level which are known to affect levels of criminality. We will be updating the formula in the light of new data, and we are exploring the possibility of linking performance expectations and resource allocation and the extent to which specific grants can be incorporated in general grant. We are also supporting wider Government consultation on three-year rather than annual grant settlements and collaborating with the Lyons Review of Local Government funding.

The settlement continues to take account of our commitment to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the police service. We expect, for the three years from 2005–06 to 2007–08, the Police Service to deliver efficiency gains of 3 per cent. per annum, half of which are to be cashable gains. Guidance on efficiency plans for 2005–06 has been issued this week.

The Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of Police Authorities are committed to working in partnership to deliver cumulative year on year improvements in the value for money to deliver the efficiency targets. Future police grant allocations will be considered in the light of police authorities meeting the target for efficiency improvements.

This is an excellent settlement. If police authorities deliver efficiency gains, and exercise judicious financial planning, there is no reason for police authorities to set excessive increases in police precepts on council tax next year. The Government's policy in relation to council tax increases of less than 5 per cent. has been clearly set out by my right hon Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and my hon. Friend the Minister for Local and Regional Government.

In this statement, I want to outline provision for support for the police service in England and Wales.

The police grant settlement

We propose to distribute the settlement as set out below. The table includes funding for both local and central spending.

Table 1: Police funding settlement for 2005–06 compared to 2004–05

	2004–05 £m[1]	*2005–06* £m[1]	*Increase* £m[1]	*Increase* %
1. Direct funding for police authorities:				
Home Office Police Grant	4,380	4,574	194	4.4
Revenue Support Grant/ Business Rates	2,889	3,045	156	5.4
Total General Formula Grant	7,269	7,619	350	4.8
Assumed Local Funding[2]	1,699	1,753	54	3.2
Total Formula Grant Spending Provision	8,968	9,322	404	4.5
Specific Grants for police authorities	708	766	58	8.2
2. Capital Grants & Support	355	358	3	0.8
3. Central Spending				
Policing[3]	491	653	162	33.0
Crime Reduction	164	172	8	4.9
Counter Terrorism, International and Organised Crime[4]	401	512	111	27.7
Grand Total	11,087	11,833	746	6.7

[1] Figures rounded to £ million.

[2] Product of policing share of assumed national council tax.

[3] The £162 million increase represents mainly £65 million for the Bichard agenda; an extra £47 million for Airwave core charges; £23.5 million for Criminal Justice Systems (IT); £15 million for ANPR and £10 million for NAFIS.

[4] Includes provision for NCS/NCIS (£257 million), Serious and Organised Crime Agency (£24 million) and counter terrorism.

Police funding proposals within the Local Government finance system are being announced by the Minister for Local and Regional Government today, and by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Provisional general policing grants (i.e. Home Office Police Grant, Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates) for English & Welsh police authorities in 2005–06 compared with 2004–05 are given in Table 2.

Amending Reports

The Amending Report for 2003–04, to take account of changes to ONS population data, was set out in my written statement of 18 November. Amending the settlement requires 10 police authorities to pay back formula grant. We have therefore adjusted 2005–06 grants to ensure that any authority owing money under the Amending Report will be able to pay it back and still be left with at least the floor grant increase over 2004–05. The consultation period on the Amending Report 2003–04 will end on the same date as the consultation on the funding settlement proposals 2005–06 on 11 January 2005.

Welsh police authorities

The Home Secretary has for several years provided additional funding to ensure Welsh police authorities receive at least a minimum increase in grant in line with English authorities. This additional support (£14m) will continue in 2005–2006 and is included in Table 2.

There are to be minor boundary changes affecting South Wales and Dyfed Powys, taking effect from 1 April 2005. These changes are not yet reflected in the figures in Table 2 but will be incorporated into the final Police Grant Report put to the House.

Metropolitan Police funding

Grant for the Metropolitan Police Authority will increase from £1.822 million to £1.928 billion, a cash increase of £106 million or 5.8 per cent. Including an extra £4.2 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, the cash increase is £110.2 million. As part of general grant, I have increased the formula provision for the Metropolitan Police national and capital city functions by £10 million to £217 million. The Metropolitan Police will receive separately provision for counter-terrorism. The Metropolitan Police will also receive a range of specific grants including London Allowance payments (£34 million) and free officer travel (£3.0 million).

Specific grants for police authorities

In addition to increased general grants, police authorities will continue to receive extra funding through a range of specific grants for particular schemes. Targeted grants were introduced as a direct response to what the police service and the public told us they wanted. Specific grants enable us to target funds to the areas where they are particularly needed. We have again tried to minimise provision for specific grants next year to maximise general grants which may be spent at the discretion of police authorities. Total provision for specific grants in 2005–06 is £766 million.

Specific grants for 2005–06 compared with 2004–05 are set out at Table 3.

The main specific grants are:

Crime Fighting Fund: £277 million will be made available to forces in 2005–06 to continue to support the costs of officers recruited through the Crime Fighting Fund. A further £8 million to cover pay inflation has been included within the general grant uplift. This Fund has been remarkably successful in helping the police service boost its strength which reached a record level of 139,728 in August 2004. Subject to forces maintaining their strength, we will continue to pay for the 9,650 police officers recruited through the scheme by a combination of specific and general grant.

Counter Terrorism: As last year, we will continue to provide additional funding to the Police Service to enable it to respond to the increased threat from international terrorism. We will be providing the Metropolitan Police with some £61 million in 2005–06 for ring-fenced counter terrorism funding. Provincial forces in England and Wales will receive £35 million of revenue and £8 million of capital in 2005–06 for dedicated counter terrorism work. This will be allocated following full consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers and individual forces. In total the Police Service of England and Wales (including the Metropolitan Police) will receive £96 million of revenue and £8 million of capital to enable it to counter the increased risk from international terrorism.

Basic Command Unit (BCU) funds: £50 million will again be provided for BCUs. These are at the forefront of local policing. The grant is targeted towards forces with BCUs in high crime areas to help reduce crime in partnership with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. All forces in England and Wales receive a share of the grant. Next year will be the third year of the Fund. BCU Commanders will have discretion locally to pool their BCU allocations with the new Safer and Stronger Communities Fund if they wish.

Special Priority Payments: The pay and conditions package agreed by the Police Negotiating Board in May 2002 introduced new elements into police pay such as payments for the most experienced officers who can demonstrate a high level of professional competence and extra rewards for officers in the most difficult and demanding posts. For 2005–06 I have again split the allocation. A further £9 million (making £18 million) has been included in general grant. £69 million will be available as a specific grant, an increase of £9 million over the provision for 2004–05.

Community Support Officers (CSOs): CSOs free up police officer time, provide reassurance and have powers to deal with aspects of anti-social behaviour and low level crime. For 2005–06, we have allocated £49.5 million for continuing support of CSOs recruited in the first three rounds from 2002 onwards. In addition to this, I announced on 24 November the introduction of a Neighbourhood Policing Fund which would provide initially £50 million to be spent on additional CSOs to bring us up to our target of 5,500 by 31 March 2005. We have allocated £13 million for the last quarter of this financial year and £37 million for continuation funding in 2005–06.

Rural Policing Fund: £30 million is again provided for the particular needs of the 31 forces with the most widespread populations. There is no change to the formulae underpinning the fund.

Airwave: Specific revenue grant for Airwave locally determined or 'menu' services will be made available to ensure that all forces will have received the sums originally promised when Airwave was first introduced. Payments have been made as Airwave became 'Ready for Service' in each force. Delays in rollout in some areas have meant that some forces have not yet obtained the full amount of originally promised funding. A final £17.3 million will be paid to 26 forces. Forces were notified of their allocations on 20 October.

Street Crime Initiative: This was launched by the Prime Minister in April 2002 and the initiative successfully brought down levels of robbery by 24 per cent. in its first two years. There has been a further 15 per cent. reduction across England and Wales in the first quarter of 2004–05. The aim of the initiative was to bring down levels of robbery which had climbed steeply. We have achieved this aim. Funding was due to cease at the end of 2004–05, however we have retained a residual specific grant in 2005–06 of £6.5 million to ensure that the benefits of the initiative are not lost and that we retain our capability to tackle mobile phone theft and other robbery. This will be allocated to forces with the biggest challenges.

Other specific grants

We will make available funding for the following: 75 per cent. of the cost of the London and South East Allowances (£55 million).

Funding support for the cost of free travel for Metropolitan and City of London officers (£3.2 million).

DNA Expansion Programme. Approximately £46 million grants will be available to continue support for this and the successor Programme, the Forensic Integration, Strategy (FIS). The DNA Expansion Programme has helped to demonstrate the value of the effective use of forensics and FIS will help to build on this.

Police authority capital

The Home Secretary and I intend to allocate provision of capital grant for 2005–06 later this month.

Central spending on policing

Central spending on policing will total £653 million. This includes funding for Airwave core charges, DNA, funding to develop the Bichard agenda, National Strategy for Police Information Systems, Criminal Justice System (IT), Police Information Technology Organisation, Centrex, the Independent Police Complaints Commission, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and National Automated Fingerprint Identification Service (NAFIS).

Serious Organised Crime Agency

We are also establishing the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill recently introduced into Parliament. This agency will mean a step change in how we fight and defeat organised crime and the harm that is caused by it. The harm is currently estimated to be at least £20 billion a year to the United Kingdom. It will be a new organisation with a new operation that will bring together the functions of NCS and NCIS, which will be abolished as a result, as well as the serious drug trafficking and organised immigration crime aspects of Customs and the Immigration Service. The costs of these constituencies will transfer into SOCA once it is established in April 2006. The cost met by the Home Office in 2005–06 is estimated at £24 million.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The Home Office is investing £75 million over 3 years to 2005–06, including £25 million next year, to deliver many of the commitments in the 'Together tackling anti-social behaviour' action plan.

Safer and Stronger Communities Fund

The newly created Safer and Stronger Communities Fund will bring together existing Home Office and ODPM funding streams. This Fund will total a minimum of £210 million in 2005–06, the Home Office contributing a minimum of £70 million resource and £20 million capital. The police service, subject to the agreement of other local partners, will be able to draw upon these funds to support local crime reduction initiatives.

Asset Recovery Police Incentivisation scheme

This scheme boosts asset recovery by giving forces a direct stake in the proceeds they generate from the work. The police service will receive one third of the total assets recovered over and above £40 million in 2004–05. This will increase to one half in 2005–06 with the maximum benefit available to the police of £65 million.

Pensions

We are addressing the financial pressures of police pensions. Overall costs have grown steadily in recent years but are expected to increase more sharply in 2005–06 because of historic recruitment patterns. From 2006–07 new arrangements for funding pensions will protect forces from extraordinary fluctuations. For 2005–06 the Home Secretary and I are providing some general relief.

The Government Actuary's Department has used the most recent data from each force to calculate cost projections for 2005–06. These have been used to allocate pensions provision in the general grant formula. For the future, we are reviewing current arrangements to make pensions' costs more predictable and manageable. Police authorities would continue to meet police pensions, funded by employer and employee contributions and topped up by central Government if that were insufficient to meet the audited pensions bill.

Conclusion

We have listened carefully to all stakeholders in determining this settlement. We are continuing to provide the resources the police service need to work effectively and matching reform with investment. The proposals will ensure that all forces in England & Wales receive a fair share of resources. There is a guaranteed minimum increase in general grants for all police authorities but resources are also being targeted to where resources are needed most. The settlement will allow us to maintain record police officer numbers as well as expand the growing number of Community Support Officers, who are reassuring the public and helping to reduce crime and fear of crime.

Table 2: Police grant allocations by English end Welsh police authority

Police Authority	*2004–05 Allocation[1] £m*	*2005–06 Allocation[1] £m*	*Change %*	*2003–04 Amending Report Change £m*	*2005–06 Allocation Net of AR Change £m*	*Change %*
English Shire forces						
Avon & Somerset	162.2	170.1	4.85%	0.0	170.0	4.83%
Bedfordshire	62.1	65.2	4.91%	−0.2	65.0	4.58%
Cambridgeshire	73.4	77.9	6.15%	0.1	78.1	6.35%
Cheshire	107.2	111.3	3.75%	0.2	111.5	3.95%
Cleveland	86.8	90.9	4.72%	0.2	91.1	4.92%
Cumbria	59.6	62.1	4.13%	−0.2	61.9	3.76%
Derbyshire	101.2	105.0	3.75%	0.0	105.0	3.75%
Devon & Cornwall	166.8	173.0	3.75%	0.0	173.0	3.75%
Dorset	63.6	66.0	3.75%	0.0	66.0	3.75%
Durham	84.2	87.8	4.30%	−0.4	87.4	3.77%
Essex	160.9	167.0	3.75%	0.0	167.0	3.75%
Gloucestershire	58.9	61.1	3.77%	0.0	61.1	3.77%
Hampshire	190.5	197.7	3.75%	0.0	197.7	3.75%
Hertfordshire	104.8	108.8	3.77%	0.0	108.8	3.77%
Humberside	114.6	118.9	3.75%	0.2	119.1	3.95%
Kent	182.6	189.5	3.75%	0.0	189.5	3.75%
Lancashire	182.9	190.8	4.33%	0.4	191.2	4.53%
Leicestershire	102.0	107.8	5.66%	−0.3	107.5	5.38%
Lincolnshire	60.6	63.4	4.54%	0.0	63.4	4.54%
Norfolk	82.2	85.9	4.51%	−0.5	85.4	3.92%
North Yorkshire	72.7	75.4	3.75%	0.0	75.4	3.75%
Northamptonshire	64.3	67.8	5.49%	0.1	67.9	5.69%
Nottinghamshire	127.6	133.4	4.52%	−0.5	132.8	4.09%
Staffordshire	109.2	113.3	3.75%	0.0	113.3	3.75%
Suffolk	66.0	68.5	3.75%	0.0	68.5	3.75%
Surrey	88.2	91.5	3.75%	0.0	91.5	3.75%
Sussex	158.1	164.0	3.75%	0.0	164.0	3.75%
Thames Valley	212.7	220.6	3.75%	0.0	220.6	3.75%
Warwickshire	49.8	51.8	4.06%	0.0	51.8	4.06%
West Mercia	107.7	111.8	3.75%	0.0	111.8	3.75%
Wiltshire	60.6	62.9	3.91%	−0.1	62.9	3.76%
Shires Total	3,324.0	3,460.9	4.12%	−1.0	3,459.9	4.09%

Table 2: Police grant allocations by English end Welsh police authority

Police Authority	2004–05 Allocation[1] £m	2005–06 Allocation[1] £m	Change %	2003–04 Amending Report Change £m	2005–06 Allocation Net of AR Change £m	Change %
English Metropolitan forces						
Greater Manchester	393.2	412.6	4.93%	0.8	413.4	5.13%
Merseyside	248.4	257.7	3.75%	0.5	258.2	3.95%
Northumbria	221.4	232.2	4.88%	0.4	232.6	5.09%
South Yorkshire	178.0	185.7	4.33%	−1.0	184.7	3.77%
West Midlands	399.3	426.7	6.86%	0.8	427.5	7.07%
West Yorkshire	298.9	313.7	4.96%	0.6	314.3	5.16%
Mets Total	1,739.1	1,828.5	5.14%	2.2	1,830.7	5.27%
London forces						
GLA—Police	1,822.0	1,928.0	5.82%	4.2	1,932.3	6.05%
City of London[2]	32.7	35.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
London Total	1,854.7	1,963.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English Total	6,917.8	7,253.2	4.85%	5.4	7,258.6	4.85%
Welsh forces						
Dyfed-Powys[3]	50.3	52.2	3.75%	0.0	52.2	3.75%
Gwent[3]	71.1	74.1	4.17%	−0.3	73.8	3.77%
North Wales[3]	75.2	78.3	4.06%	−0.2	78.0	3.76%
South Wales[3]	168.2	174.5	3.75%	0.0	174.5	3.75%
Welsh total	364.9	379.1	3.90%	−0.5	378.6	3.76%
TOTAL	7,282.7	7,632.3	4.80%	4.9	7,637.2	4.87%

Notes:

[1] Rounded to the nearest £100,000. Grant as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance (Police) Report (Wales). This includes the Metropolitan Police special payment, and the effects of floors and ceilings.

[2] Figures for the City of London relate to Home Office Grant only as calculated in the Police Grant Report (England and Wales). Revenue Support Grant is allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions. The City is grouped with education authorities for the purposes of floors and ceilings.

[3] Welsh base positions are adjusted to account for the transfer of PFI funding out of RSG.

Table 3: Specific grant allocations in 2005–06 compared with 2004–05

	2004–05 £m	2005–06 £m	Variance £m	Variance %
Crime Fighting Fund	279	217	−2	−0.7
Counter Terrorism	84	96	12	14.3
PNB Special Priority Payments	50	69	19	38.0
London & SE Allowances (incl Pay Lead & Travel)	52	58	6	11.5
Basic Command Units	50	50	0	0
Community Support Officers	41	50	9	21.9
DNA	52	46	−6	−11.5
Neighbourhood Policing Fund	13	37	24	184.6
Rural	30	30	0	0
Airwave Grant—mainly Menu Costs	7	24	17	242.9
Wales floor	14	14	0	0
Street Crime	25	6	−18	−72.0
Other	11	9	−2	−18.2
Total specific grant	708	766	58	8.2

Reconviction Rates

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): The Home Office has today published two online national statistics reports on reconviction rates, which are the basis for measuring progress against its 2002 public service agreement target, to reduce reoffending for young offenders and for adult offenders by 5 per cent. by 2005–06.

The results are:

for juveniles, a reduction in reconvictions of 4.5 per cent. for those dealt with in 2001 and 3.6 per cent. for 2002, both as compared to 2000;

for adults, a 1.8 per cent. reduction for those starting a community sentence or discharged fromcustody in 2001, compared to 2000.

Both of these are encouraging and demonstrate that we are on course to meet our PSA target.

The juvenile report includes a correction of figures published in 2003 in Home Office Online Report 18/03. That report indicated that 2001 figures showed a 22.5 per cent.reduction in reconvictions compared to 1997. As a result of an internal review of the methodology for calculating these figures, errors were identified and we commissioned an independent peer review, which confirmed the methodology used. The corrected figure for the fall in reconvictions between 1997 and 2001 is 7 per cent. Although lower than the previously published figure, this is nevertheless very significant progress.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): A report on the review of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission (AEBC) has been published today. The review has been conducted by an independent reviewer,

Dr. Neil Williams, in line with the Cabinet Office guidance for reviewing non-departmental public bodies. Its main recommendation is that the AEBC should be wound up by the end of the current financial year.

I, and ministerial colleagues involved in the funding of the AEBC, are grateful for this report. We accept the advice of the review committee, that the report should be published as soon as possible and with minimal comment from Ministers. We would like to express our thanks and support for work that the AEBC has carried out since its creation four years ago. We acknowledge the dedication of its members. The contribution of its chairman, Professor Malcolm Grant, has been key to everything the commission has so far achieved.

We now intend to consider the recommendations of the independent review very carefully, and aim to reach a decision shortly. We will however ensure that we engage with stakeholders prior to making decisions on the future of the AEBC or a successor body.

I have written to the Chairman of the AEBC asking the commission to continue to carry out their current work programme, but to bear in mind the review's recommendations.

The Science and Technology Committee, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and the Environmental Audit Committee have been sent copies of this report. It has also been sent to the Chair, Deputy Chair and Members of the AEBC, learned societies and other stakeholders and I have placed copies in the Libraries of both Houses. An electronic version of the report has been placed on the Office of Science and Technology website at: http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/bodies/review.htm.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Report 2004

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I have today published my Department's autumn performance report for 2004. Copies have been laid before Parliament and placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The report sets out the Department's progress made on our seven public service agreement targets over the last six months since the publication of the annual report in May 2004.

Local Transport Capital Settlement 2005–06

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Charlotte Atkins): Today I am announcing firm allocations for the 116 local highway authorities and six passenger transport authorities in England, outside London, for capital expenditure in 2005–06. This settlement amounts to a £1.62 billion package of funding for local transport. This brings the total investment in local transport projects in the last five years to over £8 billion, a 100 per cent. increase compared to the previous five years. Today's announcement clearly demonstrates the Government's continuing commitment to delivering better local transport.

This year's settlement delivers the final tranche of funding for local transport that the Government committed to in the five year indicative allocations, announced in 2000. As previously stated, Ministers have delivered sustained and predictable funding for each of the five years of the first LTP period (2001–06). This emphasises the Government's continuing commitment to the local transport system as a means of delivering sustained improvements to the transport infrastructure and, thus, to making real improvements to people's lives.

Authorities undertaking approved major schemes are also being given allocations to cover their spending on these schemes in 2005–06. I am approving eight new major local transport schemes:

Watford Interchange Scheme, a package of enhancements to Watford Junction rail station;

Derby Inner Ring Road Maintenance, crucial maintenance works in Derby;

West Midlands Red Routes, the first red routes scheme in the West Midlands conurbation;

Liverpool Edge Lane West, a scheme to improve the Eastern gateway to Liverpool, linked toCapital of Culture plans and a key regeneration area;

Castleford Integrated Transport Scheme: package of integrated transport improvements in akey regeneration area.

Bexhill to Hastings Link Road, a new link road which is a crucial component of theregeneration plan for Hastings.

Sittingbourne Northern Distributor Road, a new road to improve access to Sittingbourne. Itwill support the growth of housing and jobs in the Thames Gateway area;

Portsmouth Copnor Bridge, the urgent replacement of a bridge on a key access route forPortsmouth.

I have also given final funding approval to seven major schemes which have now successfully completed all of the necessary statutory procedures:

Barford Bypass in Warwickshire;

Wolverhampton Centre Access and Interchange;

North West Taunton Package;

A38 Northfield Regeneration Route in Birmingham;

A4146 Stoke Hammond and Linslade Bypass in Buckinghamshire;

Trimelines' Quality Bus Scheme in Coventry;

South Lowestoft Relief Road in Sufffolk.

Details of the 2005–06 allocations have been placed in the Libraries of the House. Right hon. and hon. Members representing English constituencies outside London will receive full details for the local transport plan area covering their constituencies, from their regional government office, by the start of next week.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Occupational Pensions Security

The Minister for Pensions (Malcolm Wicks): Since the financial assistance scheme was announced in May we have made good progress in scoping what is an extremely complex problem, involving hundreds of pension schemes, with differing scheme rules and in different stages of winding up. Following an initial data-gathering exercise, we laid a report before the House in June, setting out an estimate of the numbers affected.

Ministers and officials have since consulted with scheme members, trade unions and industry experts to gather and analyse more data, and explore options for the best way to get assistance to those who need it most.

Obviously, the full extent of the problem can be known only once all potentially eligible schemes have been identified and information obtained on the individuals affected and the extent of their losses.

In September, we launched a second, more detailed data-gathering exercise to identify potentially eligible schemes. It is important that all scheme trustees and actuaries who think their schemes might be eligible respond by 10 December. Data-gathering on the position of individuals will follow.

While we continue to seek industry contributions to the financial assistance scheme, full participation in this exercise is an immediate opportunity for the pensions industry to provide valuable practical help and assistance in kind.

As we have previously said, the scheme will not give everyone all of what they want. Nor will the scheme provide the same assistance levels as the pension protection fund, which provides cover going forward, funded by a levy. The primary objective is to provide significant help to those who have lost the most.

The available funding is set. People who are younger have more time to work and save for a pension to replace one that has been wholly or partially lost. Therefore we are minded to gear assistance levels with reference to the number of years an individual is from their retirement. To further focus resources, we are considering making payments for all individuals at age 65.

The pension protection fund has a benefit cap for those below scheme pension age, and it makes sense that the FAS should also have one, which we intend to set at a lower level.

To minimise bureaucracy and to maximise payments to those facing the most serious losses, Ministers intend that, other assistance criteria aside, the FAS will include only those who will receive at least £10 a week, or equivalent, from the scheme.

Information already gathered makes clear that the vast majority of those that had started winding up with significant funding shortfalls did so after January 1997. We can therefore confirm that members of schemes that commenced winding up from 1 January 1997 will potentially be eligible, subject to the other FAS entry rules. Schemes starting to wind up right through to the introduction of the pension protection fund (6 April 2005) will also be potentially eligible.

Solvent employers have a duty to support their schemes and provide the benefits that members were expecting. So, it is right that the FAS focuses on insolvent employers. Nevertheless, issues concerning the definition of "employer solvency" remain under active consideration.

Those who have lost out due to their scheme winding up underfunded have already seen their expectations for retirement upset once. It is therefore important that the resources available for FAS are deployed in a way that ensures that any new promise made to those eligible will be delivered. This points to providing assistance by means of top-up to the occupational pension that individuals would otherwise receive. Trustees should therefore fulfill their duty to wind up schemes in an expeditious manner, including annuitisation where appropriate. We will consider further the precise means of delivery—options include a top-up pension, a cash lump sum, or purchase of an annuity at age 65.

Early next year we would hope to be in a position to announce what we propose by way of indicative assistance levels to those facing the most urgent difficulties, as well as an indicative list of schemes that are likely to be eligible for assistance if those schemes are subsequently shown to comply with the FAS rules.

The complexity of the issue, the amount of data that has had to be collected, and the level of consultation undertaken, means that the formal regulatory consultation will begin in the spring.

In April we will set up the body to administer the scheme and following the formal consultation we will lay regulations before Parliament, making payments as soon as practicable thereafter.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Merthyr Tydfil county borough council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The "Performance Standards for Housing Benefits" allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2002–03, Merthyr Tydfil county borough council administered some £11 million in housing benefits, about 10 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

BFI found that Merthyr Tydfil county borough council was providing a poor benefits service and was not at standard in any of the seven functional areas of performance standards.

BFI reports that there have been some improvements in the benefits service following a critical Corporate Governance Inspection by the Audit Commission in Wales in January 2003. However, significant work remains to be done to deliver an effective and secure benefits service.

The report notes a lack of strategic and operational planning in the benefits service that left it without direction. Insufficient and inaccurate management information and limited reporting arrangements meant that senior management and elected members were unaware of the extent of the problems affecting the service.

BFI found levels of inaccuracy to be 90 per cent. for new claims processing and 75 per cent. for changes of circumstances. The council also had a poor record

of recovering overpayments and the absence of management checks and controls meant that performance was not properly monitored.

The council had carried out a number of good quality fraud investigations but had not followed all through to a logical conclusion resulting in only 11 prosecutions between April 2001 and March 2004.

The council recognised the need to improve the service and has asked for help from the BFI's Performance Improvement Action Team.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Chester-le-Street District Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Chester-le-Street district council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards for housing benefits' allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2003–04, Chester-le-Street district council administered some £11 million in housing benefits, about 34 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

In June 2004, BFI carried out an inspection of Chester-le-Street district council and found that the council was not at standard in any of the seven functional areas of performance standards. Overall the council is providing a fair level of service.

The report notes that the council has made progress in addressing some of the weaknesses BFI highlighted in the comprehensive performance assessment that took place in October 2003 when BFI considered the benefits service to be providing a poor performance. It can now demonstrate how the service contributes to the council's corporate aims, it has cleared its claims backlog and is achieving upper quartile performance for claims processing.

However, there are still several issues that the council needs to address. There is no performance monitoring at a corporate level and the benefits service has not developed specific performance measures and targets to facilitate the monitoring of progress towards its objectives. The service's objectives are not prioritised and there is no link between these and individual job descriptions.

The council's high level commitment to provide an effective benefits service is not adequately reflected in its operational planning and staff development. Staff training needs have not been assessed and there is no training programme in place. Job descriptions fail to reflect current duties and consequently, lines of responsibility have become blurred.

The BFI reports that counter-fraud performance has suffered because attention has been focused on claims processing. This has resulted in insufficient resources and a lack of effective counter-fraud measures.

The council has developed a service improvement plan and there is now an effective electronic procedures manual to guide staff. Verification procedures are strictly followed and the council has introduced a claim form based upon the Department's claim form.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

City of York Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on the City of York council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards for housing benefits allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2003–04, the City of York council administered some £29 million in housing benefits, about 11 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

BFI found that City of York council was providing poor benefits service and was not at standard in any of the seven functional areas of performance standards.

A best value review of its revenues and benefits services had resulted in a revised organisational structure and the implementation of a new benefits IT system in September 2003. City of York council said their difficulties with the implementation were the main cause of a backlog of work building up and this adversely affected its performance. In particular, its performance for processing new claims was very poor, taking an average of 81 days.

The report notes key management disciplines of planning, target setting, monitoring and control, checking and assurance testing were inadequate. Limited management information was obtained but only some was used effectively to manage performance.

BFI reports that the quality of verification of evidence to support claims was of a good standard. However, inadequate management checking meant there was insufficient assurance that the benefits system was secure or that benefit was being paid correctly. The report raises concerns about failures to comply with key legal requirements of housing benefit and council tax benefit legislation.

The council did not keep reliable records of customer complaints and many appeals remained outstanding for long periods.

The benefits service had failed to respond to internal audit recommendations and public accountability was being compromised by inadequate arrangements for reporting audit activity and performance to elected members.

The report notes serious failings in the recovery of overpayments. City of York council was recovering overpayments even though customers had not been advised of the overpayment decisions.

The council's efforts to counter fraud were more positive and it had achieved some impressive results as demonstrated by the full range of sanctions being applied and every case submitted for prosecution had been successful.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Rutland County Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Rutland county council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The "Performance Standards for Housing Benefits" allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2002–03, Rutland county council administered some £3.72 million in housing benefits, about 12 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

In June 2004 BFI carried out an inspection of Rutland county council and, although it was performing well in a number of elements of performance standards, it was not at standard in any of the seven functional areas.

BFI found the council to be providing a fair service. There was a strong commitment at all levels within the council to provide an efficient benefits service and a high proportion of customers expressed satisfaction with the service provided.

The report notes that there were some strengths in the council's benefits service including clear and accessible claim forms, clear informative decision letters and effective internal security practices.

The average time taken to process new claims was 19 days against the standard of 36 days and 90 per cent. of new claims were processed within 14 days of receiving all information. Verification of evidence supporting benefit claims was good. However, at the time of BFI's inspection, there was no management checking.

The council identified and calculated benefit overpayments quickly but BFI considered that it needed to improve the accuracy of its management information and use all the recovery methods available to it.

The inspection was prompted by the council's failure to give any priority to countering benefit fraud. In June 2004, the council started to address its responsibilities to fight benefit fraud with the creation of a dedicated counter-fraud team.

BFI reports the council has been receptive to the findings in the report and implemented a number of changes immediately.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 6 December 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): My noble Friend the Secretary of State has made the following written ministerial statement:

"I am today publishing DCA'S strategy for the next five years. This explains how we intend to reform and modernise the justice system and constitution so that they are transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of the public. An overview of the strategy and the detailed strategy itself are both available on the DCA website www.dca.gov.uk/, and I shall also be placing copies in the Libraries of both Houses".

DEFENCE

War Pensions Uprating

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): The new rates of war pensions and allowances proposed from April 2005 are set out in the tables below. The annual uprating of war pensions and allowances for 2005 will take place from the week beginning 11 April.

War Pensions Rates

Weekly rates unless otherwise shown	*Rates 2004*	*Rates 2005*
WAR PENSIONS		
Disablement Pension (100% rates)		
officer (£ per annum)	6,648.00	6,851.00
other ranks	127.40	131.30
Age allowances		
40%–50%	8.55	8.80
over 50% but not over 70%	13.10	13.50
over 70% but not over 90%	18.65	19.25
over 90%	26.20	27.00
Disablement gratuity		
specified minor injury (min.)	810.00	835.00
specified minor injury (max.)	6,055.00	6,243.00
unspecified minor injury (min.)	335.00	345.00
unspecified minor injury (max.)	7,874.00	8,118.00
Unemployability allowance		
personal	78.70	81.15
adult dependency increase	44.35	45.70
increase for first child	10.30	10.60
increase for subsequent children	12.10	12.50
Invalidity allowance		
higher rate	15.55	16.05
middle rate	10.00	10.30
lower rate	5.00	5.15

War Pensions Rates

Weekly rates unless otherwise shown	*Rates 2004*	*Rates 2005*
Constant attendance allowance		
exceptional rate	96.20	99.20
intermediate rate	72.15	74.40
full day rate	48.10	49.60
part-day rate	24.05	24.80
Comforts allowance		
higher rate	20.60	21.20
lower rate	10.30	10.60
Mobility supplement	45.85	47.25
Allowance for lowered standard of occupation (maximum)	48.04	49.52
Therapeutic earnings limit	3,744.00	4,056.00
Exceptionally severe disablement allowance	48.10	49.60
Severe disablement occupational allowance	24.05	24.80
Clothing allowance (£ per annum)	164.00	169.00
Education allowance (£ per annum) (max)	120.00	120.00
War widow(er)s' pension (further details in schedule WWP)		
widow(er)s—private	96.50	99.50
widow(er)s—(other ranks)	96.50	99.50
widow(er)s—Officer (£ pa max)	5,938.00	6,132.00
Childless widow(er)s'u-40 (other ranks)	23.13	23.85
Childless widow(er)s'u-40 (Officer max. £s pa)	5,948.00	6,132.00
Supplementary pension	62.68	64.62
Age allowance		
(a) age 65–69	11.05	11.40
(b) age 70 to 79	21.15	21.80
(c) age 80 and over	31.40	32.35
Children's allowance		
Increase for first child	15.20	15.65
Increase for subsequent children	16.95	17.50
Orphan's pension		
Increase for first child	17.25	17.80
Increase for subsequent children	18.95	19.55
Unmarried dependant living as spouse (max.)	94.15	97.15
Rent allowance (max.)	36.40	37.55
Adult orphan's pension (max.)	74.15	76.45

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Fire and Rescue National Framework

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): Today the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is publishing the 2005–06 fire and rescue national framework.

The Government remain committed to reduce the number of fire deaths and deliberate fires. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's fire public service agreement target commits us to achieving long-term reductions in fire deaths and arson, including in the worst off areas. The Government also recognise the fire and rescue national framework sets out the strategy for meeting the Government's objectives and delivering an improved service that achieves better value for money for the communities it serves.

At the request of fire and rescue authorities we agreed to publish the 2005–06 national framework in time to inform authorities' budget setting processes. The 2005–06 national framework reflects progress that has been made since the publication of the 2004–05 national framework in July 2004 and reflects comments we have received in response to our consultation exercise. We have carefully considered all responses and have reflected them in the national framework where appropriate. The Government's full response to the comments is published on the ODPM website.

The national framework is a forward looking document. Fire and rescue authorities will soon begin the process of comprehensive performance assessment. Fire CPA will provide a robust assessment of progress by the service since publication of the White Paper and a firm basis for further improvement.

The 2005–06 national framework has effect under section 21(6) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 as a revision, which appears to the Secretary of State to be significant, of the 2004–05 national framework.

Copies of the 2005–06 national framework will be made available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): On Wednesday this week the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) will be launching its proposals for revising the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England. I am today announcing that public consultation on EERA's draft proposals will commence on Wednesday and run until 16 March 2005.

This is the first RSS to come forward under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The draft revisions set out EERA's view as to the appropriate spatial development strategy to guide planning and development in the East of England to the year 2021. The RSS sets out EERA's proposals for the development of the region's economy, housing and transport infrastructure. It also encompasses policies and proposals for the environment, town centres, waste, culture, sport and recreation, and mineral extraction.

The RSS will provide the regional framework for the plans and strategies of a range of public, private and voluntary organisations, including the preparation of local authority development plans and local transport plans.

These proposals have been prepared by EERA as the regional planning body in consultation with a wide range of regional and local stakeholders.

In order to allow for the Christmas holiday period, public consultation has been extended from the minimum 12 weeks required by statute to 14 weeks, ending on 16 March 2005. It is open to anybody to make representations on the content of EERA's draft RSS. Public consultation is a key part of our planning reforms and I would urge stakeholders to take the opportunity offered to make their views known. Full details about the consultation document and how to respond are available on EERA's website and at local council offices.

The consultation will lead on to an examination in public (EiP) to debate and test EERA's draft proposals. The EiP is due to start in September 2005. A panel independent of EERA and central government will oversee the EiP process. The panel will, on the basis of the representations received, decide which matters should be discussed and who should be invited to attend.

Following the EiP, the panel will prepare a report of findings and recommendations to the Government on how the draft RSS might be improved. This will be a public report, due in early 2006. The Government will then issue proposed changes to the draft RSS, taking account of the panel's recommendations and representations on any matters not considered at the EiP. The proposed changes are likely to be published for public consultation during summer 2006.

The Secretary of State will then make any final amendments in the light of the responses to the proposed changes consultation, and issue the final RSS for the East of England late in 2006.

Copies of the relevant documents will be available in the Libraries of both Houses and have been provided for all of the region's MPs, MEPs and local authorities.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFAIRS

Sustainable Waste Management

The Minister for the Environment and Agri-environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): My right hon. Friend, the Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill), and I are today publishing four consultation papers on waste strategies and planning which aim to provide a more integrated and effective framework in England for delivering the significant expansion in new waste management facilities needed to meet EU obligations and national policy.

The Government's vision for waste, embodying the principles of sustainable development, is to protect the environment and human health by producing less waste and using it as a resource wherever possible. In particular, this means reducing reliance on landfill. The way we handle waste has to change dramatically. This means a major change in our attitude to waste: manufacturers, consumers, waste managers and central and local government alike. And it means a step change in waste management, including significant new investment in waste plant.

The Government do not underestimate the size of the task. Some waste streams, such as household waste, continue to grow, driven by consumer demand and economic growth. Other waste streams, and treatment routes, are subject to increasingly rigorous controls and standards to reduce their harmfulness. And manufacturers are increasingly required to take responsibility for the treatment or disposal of products at the end of their life.

Central Government have responsibility for setting the policy and legislative framework. Regional planning bodies and local government have responsibility for generating the strategies and plans which guide delivery of those policies through provision of the infrastructure and services needed on the ground. The process depends vitally on long term municipal waste management strategies and development plans which together identify the amount of waste, how it will be managed and the facilities needed, and ensure their adequate and timely provision.

The consultation sets out proposals for a stronger, simpler and more integrated framework for delivering those outcomes. The suite of papers are:

(i) the draft new planning policy statement (PPS) 10: "Planning for Sustainable Waste Management";

(ii) draft guidance on the preparation of municipal waste management strategies;

(iii) proposed changes to waste strategy 2000, underpinning (i) and (ii) above; and

(iv) proposals for the periodic provision of national data and advice on waste arisings, recycling potential and any national capacity needs.

The Government expects all local authorities either to produce or contribute to the development or revision of a municipal waste management strategy. In some areas this is a statutory requirement. The new guidance on municipal waste management strategies replaces the guidance published by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions in 2001. It aims to provide greater clarity on the Government's waste management objectives and decision making principles, the role of the strategies and the key requirements for developing and reviewing them. It also emphasises the need for achieving best value through both partnership working with other local authorities and the private and community sectors.

The planning system is pivotal to the adequate and timely provision of the new facilities needed for all types of waste. In revising existing planning guidance, the aim is to provide clarity on what is required regionally and locally to ensure that decisions are made at the most appropriate level and at the right time. The Government expect development plans to be up-to-date and fit for purpose. And waste planning authorities should plan for, and consent, the necessary number and range of facilities to support sustainable waste management.

Both documents will:

underline the need for effective integration of waste strategies and plahning processes andpolicies regionally and locally, with full appraisal of options in their development;

provide the framework for setting a long term vision for 15–20 years ahead and a short termdetailed plan of action;

provide for regular (annual) monitoring and review, if required;

emphasise the need for early and continuous community engagement.

The review of the effectiveness of the existing guidance, which informed the preparation of the consultation papers, included the underpinning decision-making principles set out in waste strategy 2000[1] in response to concerns expressed by a number of stakeholders. The proposed changes to waste strategy 2000 are set out in full in the third consultation paper and are incorporated in the draft planning policy statement PPS10 and draft guidance on municipal waste management strategies.

The key objective of waste policy of moving waste management up the waste hierarchy[2] has not changed.

Municipal waste management strategies and spatial plans must also ensure the delivery of the objectives of proximity of waste disposal laid down in the EU waste framework directive and of self sufficiency. These objectives are now incorporated in the objectives which must be delivered through municipal waste management strategies and development plans. Decisions on planning applications must be in line with the objectives and planning strategy in the relevant development plan. Hitherto proximity and self sufficiency had been set down as stand alone principles in waste strategy 2000. They have also been re-formulated to reflect the obligations on local authorities: to provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste (self-sufficiency), and that waste should be disposed of as near as possible to the place of production (proximity).

The role of the best practicable environmental option process in decision-making was also reviewed. The process encapsulates important principles including consultation, option appraisal, assessing long and short term environmental impacts and cost effectiveness. These remain valid and are reflected in EU and UK legislation and its implementation.

In spatial planning, regional spatial strategies and local development documents are now required to have a strategic environmental assessment, while a broader sustainability appraisal—covering additionally social and economic issues—is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. These assessments, combined with the duty to have regard to national Government objectives and guidance in preparing and implementing waste plans, will deliver the principles that underpin the best practical environmental option process. The new planning policy statement 10 does not, therefore, include best practical environmental option.

Similarly, the role that the best practical environmental option played in the development of municipal waste management strategies has been replaced by the requirement for a strategic environmental assessment combined with a thorough evaluation of social and economic factors.

The draft planning policy statement 10 includes a requirement for regional spatial strategies to take account of periodic Government advice on waste arisings and recycling potential and any nationally identified need for waste management facilities. The purpose of central Government advice would be to encourage regional planning bodies to take a consistent approach to forecasting and monitoring waste arisings and the proportion of waste that can realistically be recycled. The fourth consultation paper sets out the possible scope of such advice and the options for drawing it up and disseminating it.

The material in these consultation papers is intended to support delivery of the Government's vision for sustainable waste management by providing a clearer, consistent, and integrated policy framework for local authority municipal waste management strategies and spatial planning.

Not collecting or managing waste is not an option. Everyone has a role to play: manufacturers, waste managers, local communities and the authorities which serve them. These papers aim to help all those involved take their share of responsibility for reducing and managing waste.

[1] Primarily in Chapter 3 and Part 2

[2] Chapter 3 part 2

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Export Licence Application (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): In September 2004 the Government issued a licence for the export of ballistic body armour vests to the Ministry of Security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Ministry of Security requires the vests for the State Information and Protection Agency (SIPA). SIPA is responsible for, inter alia, diplomatic protection, which includes the British embassy in Sarajevo as well as the mission of EU partners and other allies; tackling organised crime; and investigating war crimes.

An EU arms embargo has been in place against Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1996. The purpose of the embargo was to aid the establishment of peace and stability for the people of the region, taking into account in particular the need to ensure the safety of international troops and civilian personnel deployed. The embargo was amended in 1999 to exclude demining equipment and the transfer of small arms to the police.

We fully support the EU embargo. However, we are, in limited circumstances, prepared to make exemptions where denying an export would frustrate the purposes of the embargo. The UK has been active in encouraging Bosnia and Herzegovina to take greater responsibility for maintaining the rule of law and strengthening civilian policing. I am confident that granting this exception is fully consistent with this responsible approach of supporting the development of civilian policing while respecting the aims of the embargo.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 7 December 2004

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Chaplains

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): The armed forces attach importance to supporting the spiritual development of their personnel and to facilitating, where possible, religious observance. The service chaplaincy services have a long and distinguished record of caring for service personnel. However, existing chaplains are drawn exclusively from Christian denominations, and although they provide valuable moral, pastoral and welfare support to all service personnel, they are not able to provide spiritual support to those of faiths other than Christian.

I have therefore been considering, in close consultation with the faith community representatives on the Ministry of Defence's religious advisory panel, how best we might enhance our provision for the spiritual support of personnel and their families from faith communities other than Christian. This reflects the increasing diversity of service personnel, and our desire to provide an environment which welcomes and encourages people throughout society to join, and stay with, the armed forces.

These consultations have resulted in a decision to recruit civilian chaplains to the armed forces from the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths, which are those, other than Christian, most represented within the armed forces. These chaplains will be MOD civil servants, but will be integrated into the existing service chaplaincy organisations.

Existing longstanding arrangements under which the Jewish community provides an honorary chaplain to the armed forces will continue for the time being, but it is expected that in due course a further civilian chaplain will be recruited to bring the arrangements in line with those for the other faiths.

Advertisements for these four posts will appear in the national press on Thursday 16 December, and in appropriate faith media at the closest convenient date. The relevant faith communities will participate fully in the selection process that will follow in the new year.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Regional Housing Investment

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am announcing today the publication of a consultation paper concerning the regional split of funds for housing investment by local authorities and housing associations allocated through regional housing pots.

The sustainable communities plan introduced new arrangements for allocation for mainstream funding to support housing investment. Under these new arrangements allocations are increasingly being directed to address strategic regional priorities based on advice from regional housing boards.

The split of such investment funding between the nine English regions has for many years been allocated on a largely formulaic basis. The paper seeks views on our proposal that the split continues to be made on a formulaic basis, but the formula itself be simplified and linked more directly to the Government's housing objectives and associated public service agreement targets on balancing supply and demand (PSA5) and on decent homes (PSA7).

Consultation will run until 4 February 2005. Copies of the consultation paper have been made available in the Libraries of both Houses and it is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

HEALTH

SSRIs

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Lord Warner) made the following Written Ministerial Statement on 6 December 2004.

Following interest in both Houses about the issues surrounding the safety of selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs), this statement informs the House of the completion of the United Kingdom review of SSRIs and the publication today of the report. The Committee on Safety of Medicine (CSM) expert working group has now delivered comprehensive advice on the use of these drugs in children, young people and adults following a thorough review of all the evidence available. This gives parents, patients and those who treat depressive illnesses the information they need to make informed decisions about treatment of these potentially devastating conditions.

In 2003 an expert working group of the CSM was set up to consider further the safety of SSRIs, with particular reference to suicidal behaviour and withdrawal reactions. The expert group has examined all the evidence available from a wide range of sources, including a specific objective to listen to the patient viewpoint. The expert group has already reached conclusions on the use of SSRIs in children and the Government have published its findings. This latest report focuses on the use of SSRIs in adults. The work of this group is now complete and a comprehensive account of this work is being published today. In short, it concludes that:

there should be strengthened warnings on coming off SSRIs at the end of a course of treatment and how to minimise the risk of experiencing a withdrawal reaction

there should be specific advice on using the recommended dose of the SSRI because for the majority of SSRIs in depression, clinical trial data do not show an additional benefit above the lowest recommended dose

there should be clearer advice on what is known about the risk of suicide and suicidal behaviour—while clinical trial data cannot rule out a modest increase in the risk compared

to placebo, there is now good evidence from large population studies that there is no clear increase in the risk of suicide in relation to SSRIs compared to other antidepressants

there is no clear evidence of an increased risk of self-harm and suicidal thoughts in young adults of 18 years or over. But individuals mature at different rates and young adults are at a higher background risk of suicidal behaviour than older adults, so as a precautionary measure young adults treated with SSRIs should be closely monitored. The expert group also recommended that in further research on the safety and efficacy of SSRIs young adults should be assessed separately.

The CSM has also recommended that treatment with venlafaxine (Efexor) should only be initiated by specialists and that there should be in place arrangements for ongoing supervision of the patient.

The report includes the key evidence on which the advice of the expert working group is based, including summaries of clinical trials submitted by companies at the MHRA's request. This unusual step demonstrates the MHRA's commitment to being as open as possible in drug regulation.

The report of the expert group is being published alongside guidelines from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) on depression and anxiety. In this way, the new advice of CSM can feed directly into clinical practice. Copies of the expert group's report and the NICE guidelines have been placed in the Library.

Communications to patients and prescribers are taking place today and copies of these materials have also been placed in the Library. SSRIs are an important group of medicines, which help patients who suffer depressive illness. The health benefits of SSRIs in adults are still considered to outweigh the risk of adverse drug reactions. Patients currently taking venlafaxine should not stop taking their medicine but should consult their doctor for advice on treatment as should patients taking other SSRIs who are experiencing any side effects or are concerned about their treatment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Incitement to Religious Hatred

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett): I am pleased to be able to give the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill its second reading today.

Part IV of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill contains provisions to combat the activities of the extremists within our community who stir up hatred against groups targeted because of their religious beliefs, or lack of religious beliefs, as well as those targeted on racial grounds.

Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences in 2003 highlighted the need for such protection and we have had ample further examples of that need since. We need to combat the extremists who stir up such hatred so that people can be free to practice their religion without fear. When people hate others because of their race or religious beliefs it is often manifested; this might be in the commission of subsequent crimes motivated by hate, or in abuse, discrimination or prejudice. The reactions vary from person to person, but all hatred has a detrimental effect on both individual victims and society as a whole.

These measures build on the protection already afforded by the existing incitement to racial hatred offences by amending the offences in Part III of the Public Order Act 1986 to also protect people targeted because of their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs. They will make it an offence for a person to use words or behaviour or material that they know are threatening, abusive or insulting, and which are intended or likely to stir up hatred against the target of those threats, abuse or insults.

Here are two examples of situations where, taking into account all the circumstances, the prosecuting authorities would consider taking action under the new offence:

In response to an extreme racist organisation widely distributing material setting out a range of insulting and highly inflammatory reasons for hating Islam. Such reasons have included suggesting that Muslims are a threat to British people and liable to molest women and that they should be urgently driven out of Britain.

and

In response to extremists within a faith community making repeated threatening statements stirring up followers to look for ways to make trouble for unbelievers saying that God would never ever allow unbelievers to be pleased with them and created them to be enemies.

These measures will be applied with equity, protecting people of varied religious beliefs and of none. They will provide a powerful response and a strong deterrent to extreme political and racist individuals and organisations who target people because of their religious beliefs and also to religious extremists who stir up hatred of others because they do not share their religious beliefs.

The Government are committed to the preservation of the right to legitimate freedom of speech and freedom of religion. This includes the right to engage in free and vigorous debate about religion, including the right to criticise religious beliefs and practices. The Government also recognise that proselytism is an integral activity for many faith communities. Such debate, criticism and proselytism can be undertaken without using threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour that is intended or likely to stir up hatred. Expressions of antipathy or dislike of particular religions or their adherents can also be made without crossing the thresholds of the offence. This provision will not restrict but protect people's legitimate freedom to practise their religion without fear.

The provisions do not make any blanket exceptions, for example, for any activity which may be presented as a religious activity or for the recitation of any passage from sacred texts. This is because, although the vast majority of such activities would not meet any part of the thresholds for this offence, in extreme circumstances it is, for example, possible to quote or misquote passages of sacred texts out of context so that they become threatening, abusive or insulting and intended or likely to stir up hatred. Such activities would rightly be caught by the scope of the offence. Nor do the provisions define all the terms of the offence. This is deliberate and will provide the enforcement agencies with the flexibility to

ensure that these offences make a full contribution in combating hate-mongering in all its various forms and contexts.

The proposals retain the high thresholds and necessary safeguards contained in the existing incitement to racial hatred provision. The primary safeguards are contained in the offence itself. It has a two-part structure which examines not only the content of the words, behaviour, written material, recordings or programmes, which must be threatening, abusive or insulting, but also examines the effect of the material which must be intended or likely to stir up racial or religious hatred.

"Religious hatred" is defined as "hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief". Accordingly, the offence will capture only those activities which stir up hatred of a group of people defined by their beliefs or lack of religious beliefs. It is not a new blasphemy law and will protect people rather than ideologies.

Hatred is a strong term, relating to an extreme emotion. The offences will not criminalise material that just stirs up ridicule, prejudice, dislike, contempt or anger or which simply causes offence. A further safeguard in the legislation is that a person who does not intend to stir up hatred is not guilty of an offence if they did not know that their words, behaviour, written material, recording or programmes were threatening, abusive or insulting. Furthermore the offences do not apply to anything that takes place in one's own home. All prosecutions require the consent of the Attorney-General, which will prevent the offences being misused through private prosecutions.

Of themselves, the following would not be caught by the offence:

criticising the beliefs, teachings or practices of a religion or its followers; for example by claiming that they are false or harmful;

proselytising one's own religion or urging followers of a different religion to cease practising theirs; for example Christians claiming that Jesus Christ is the way the truth, the life and the only way to God, Muslims exhorting people to submit to the will of Allah, or Atheists claiming that there is no God;

telling jokes about religions;

expressing antipathy or dislike of particular religions or their adherents.

Of themselves these activities do not meet the criteria of the offences. However if a person were to use threatening, abusive or insulting words, actions or material with the intent or likely effect that hatred would be stirred up whilst undertaking the actions listed above, then by definition, they could rightly fall into the scope of the offence.

These measures accord with, and will operate in the light of, the guarantees afforded by the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Human Rights Act any Court in interpreting legislation, including these offences, must do so in a way that is compatible with the rights under the European Convention. With these offences the rights in play are going to be Article 9, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and Article 10, the right to freedom of expression. In interpreting these offences the Court will have to consider both of these rights and, if necessary, balance one against the other. Article 9 states that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and that this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. It also states that freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject to limitations prescribed by law and necessary in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order and the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 10 of the European Convention states that everyone has the right to freedom of expression and that this includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas. Similarly it also states that the exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to restrictions prescribed by law that are necessary in the interests of public safety, the prevention of disorder or crime and the protection of the reputation or rights of others.

These offences are justifiable, necessary and proportionate measures for the prevention of disorder or crime and the protection of the rights of others; the need for which is reflected in these articles. Indeed because these provisions protect groups from hatred directed against them because of religious belief, they safeguard the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion enshrined in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Crown Prosecution Service will produce guidance on how these offences will be enforced but it is important that this guidance does not pre-empt the consideration of these proposals by Parliament. There will be consultation on that guidance as it is developed and it will be subject to regular review.

With the support of my colleague, the Attorney-General, I make this statement as a matter of public record, which can be drawn upon in any future decisions taken by all the enforcement agencies, to clarify to all that this new measure will provide protection for those who need it without restricting legitimate freedom of speech and religion.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Nuclear Decommissioning Funding Account

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): I am making this statement as required by section 31(6) of the Energy Act 2004 ("the Act") to coincide with the issuing of the ministerial directions giving the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) its designated responsibilities under the Act. The statement reflects the transitional funding arrangements for the NDA that will be put in place to allow it to get on with its work during the EC Commission investigation into notified state aid to the NDA.

In determining the amounts to be credited to the Nuclear Decommissioning Funding Account ("NDFA") under section 31(4)(c) of the Act, the following policy applies:

Basis upon which determinations for the purposes of section 31(4)(c) are to be made

1. Pending the outcome of the European Commission's investigation announced on 1 December 2004 into the UK Government's establishment of the NDA, the basis on which any determinations for the purposes of section 31(4)(c) are to be made will be to credit to the NDFA such amounts as are sufficient to provide a sound basis for funding the NDA's activities consistent with:

(a) the requirement that no new state resources shall be made available to the NDA for operating, cleaning up or decommissioning in respect of any of the economic activities of the NDA which are the subject of the Commission's investigation; and

(b) the requirement that no advantage shall be conferred on BNFL or its successor companies pending the outcome of the Commission's investigation, and in particular that the net asset position of BNFL and the group of companies of which it forms part must not be improved.

2. The amount of any determination for the purposes of section 31(4)(c) in relation to any financial year shall be the sum of the following elements:

(a) an amount equal to the value of any assets taken out of BNFL's existing resources comprising the nuclear liabilities investment portfolio ("NLIP") by way of any nuclear transfer scheme which takes effect under section 42 of the Act during that financial year;

(b) in respect of the NDA's responsibilities in relation to sites operated by UKAEA as at the date of this statement, and nuclear liabilities for which responsibility is, as at the date of this statement, accepted by UKAEA, such amount as is appropriate within the Department of Trade and Industry's relevant expenditure limit;

(c) in respect of the NDA's responsibilities in relation to nuclear liabilities for which responsibility was formerly accepted by the Ministry of Defence but is, as at the date of this statement, accepted by the Department of Trade and Industry, such amount as is appropriate within the Department of Trade and Industry's relevant expenditure limit.

3. To the extent that the assets referred to in paragraph 2(a) above do not comprise cash, their value is to be determined as at the date upon which the transfer scheme whereby they are transferred takes effect.

The minimum credit balance of the NDFA

4. For the purposes of section 31(7)(b) of the Act, the minimum credit balance of the NDFA shall be £1.

5. The basis on which this determination has been made is that the sums to be comprised in the determination in any financial year in accordance with paragraph 2 above (combined with any other amounts credited under section 31(4)(a), (c) or (d)) are expected to be sufficient to fund the NDA's activities during the financial year in question, but no more. It is intended that grants made under section 22(1) of the Act will be subject to conditions under section 22(2) which will restrict the use of sums drawn against the credits referred to in paragraphs 2(b) and (c) above to the matters respectively referred to in those paragraphs. To the extent that I conclude that further funding can and should be made available to the NDA in any given year (pending the outcome of the Commission's investigation) other than in respect of the matters referred to in paragraphs 2(b) and (c), further amounts will (if appropriate) be transferred from the NLIP and any determination which has been made under section 31(4)(c) of the Act will be revised such that corresponding credits will be made to the NDFA. Amounts equal to these credits will then be remitted to the NDA by way of grant under section 22(1) of the Act.

6. The figure of £1 will allow the maximum amount to be remitted to the NDA by way of grant under section 22(1) of the Act while still leaving a credit balance in the account.

Interpretation

7. In this statement, unless the context otherwise requires, expressions defined in the Act have the meanings given to them by the Act.

8. In addition, the following expressions have the following meanings:

economic activities means the provision of services hitherto undertaken by companies in the BNFL group that might in principle have been provided by a private sector entity, given the existence of a commercial market place and the potential for profit making. NDA's responsibilities in relation to "economic activities" will include responsibilities in respect of economic nuclear liabilities;

economic nuclear liabilities means those nuclear liabilities which exist or may come into existence in respect of sites operated as at the date of thisstatement by companies in the BNFL group, excluding those nuclear liabilities referred to in paragraphs 2(b) and (c) above.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Social Security Benefits Uprating

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): The proposed rates of benefit for 2005 are set out in the table below. The annual uprating of benefits will take place for state pension and most other benefits in the first full week of the tax year. In 2005, this will be the week beginning 11 April. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland proposes to introduce similar changes for Northern Ireland.

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2004*	*Rates 2005*
ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE		
higher rate	58.80	60.60
lower rate	39.35	40.55
CARER'S ALLOWANCE	44.35	45.70
COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT		
Personal allowances		
single		
18 to 24	44.05	44.50

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2004*	*Rates 2005*
25 or over	55.65	56.20
lone parent—18 or over	55.65	56.20
couple—one or both over 18	87.30	88.15
Dependent Children		
from birth to September following 16th birthday	42.27	43.88
from September following 16th birthday to day before 19th birthday	42.27	43.88
Pensioner (from October 2003)		
single/lone parent—60–64	105.45	109.45
couple—one or both 60–64	160.95	167.05
single/lone parent—65 and over	121.00	125.90
couple—one or both 65 and over	181.20	188.60
Premiums		
family	15.95	16.10
family (lone parent rate)	22.20	22.20
child under 1	10.50	10.50
pensioner	49.80	53.25
single	73.65	78.90
couple		
pensioner (enhanced)	49.80	53.25
single	73.65	78.90
couple		
pensioner (higher)	49.80	53.25
single	73.65	78.90
couple		
disability	23.70	23.95
single	33.85	34.20
couple		
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.60	11.70
disabled child rate	17.08	17.71
couple rate	16.75	16.90
severe disability	44.15	45.50
single	44.15	45.50
couple (lower rate)	88.30	91.00
couple (higher rate)	42.49	43.89
disabled child	25.55	25.80
carer	23.95	25.85
bereavement		
Allowance for personal expenses for claimants in hospital		
higher rate	19.90	20.50
lower rate	15.90	16.40
Non-dependant deductions aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: £322 or more	6.95	6.95
— gross income: £258–£321.99	5.80	5.80
— gross income: £150–£257.99	4.60	4.60
— gross income less than £150	2.30	2.30
others, aged 18 or over	2.30	2.30
Alternative maximum Council Tax Benefit second adult on IS, JSA(ib) or Pension Credit	25% of Council Tax	25% of Council Tax
second adult's gross income:		
— under £150	15% of Council Tax	15% of Council Tax
— £150 to £193.99	7.5% of Council Tax	7.5% of Council Tax
Capital		
upper limit	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit (claimant/partner 60 or over)	16,000.00	16,000.00
upper limit (PC guarantee) from Oct 2003	No limit	No limit
amount disregarded (claimant/partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00
child disregard	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit of RC/NH	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded of RC/NH	10,000.00	10,000.00
Tariff income		
£1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Tariff income (claimant/partner 60 or over) from October 2003		
£1 for every £500 or part thereof between amount of capital disregard and capital upper limit		
Earnings disregards		
where disability premium awarded	20.00	20.00
various specified employments	20.00	20.00
lone parent	25.00	25.00
where the claimant has a partner	10.00	10.00
single claimant	5.00	5.00
where carer premium awarded	20.00	20.00

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2004*	*Rates 2005*
childcare charges	135.00	136.00
childcare charges (2 or more children)	200.00	300.00
Other income disregards		
maintenance disregard	15.00	15.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme		10.00
certain voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
30/16 hour disregard	12.32	14.50
Expenses for subtenants		
furnished or unfurnished	4.00	4.00
where heating is included, additional	9.80	10.55

DEPENDENCY INCREASES

Adult Dependency Increases for spouse or person looking after children, with:		
state pension on own insurance, long term incapacity benefit, unemployability supplement	47.65	49.15
severe disablement allowance	44.35	45.70
carers allowance	26.65	27.50
short-term incapacity benefit if beneficiary over state pension age	26.50	27.30
maternity allowance/short-term incapacity benefit	42.65	43.95
Child Dependency Increases, with:	34.60	35.65
state pension, widowed mothers allowance, widowed parents allowance, short-term incapacity benefit at the higher rate and long term incapacity benefit, carers allowance, severe disability allowance, higher rate industrial death benefit, unemployability supplement and short-term incapacity benefit if beneficiary over pension age	11.35	11.35

NB—The Overlapping Benefits Regulations provide for the rate of child dependency increases to be adjusted where the increase is payable for the eldest eligible child for whom Child Benefit is also payable. The weekly rate of the increase is reduced by the differential (less £3.65 from April 2004) between the rate of Child Benefit payable for the oldest eligible child and that payable for a subsequent child.

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE

Care Component		
Highest	58.80	60.60
Middle	39.35	40.55
Lowest	15.55	16.05
Mobility Component		
Higher	41.05	42.30
Lower	15.55	16.05

EARNINGS RULES

Carers Allowance	79.00	82.00
Limit of earnings from councillor's allowance	72.00	78.00
Permitted work earnings limit	72.00	78.00
Industrial injuries unemployability supplement permitted earnings level (annual amount)	3,744.00	4,056.00
Adult dependency increases with short-term incapacity benefit where claimant is		
(a) under state pension age	34.60	35.65
(b) over pension age	42.65	43.95
maternity allowance	34.60	35.65
state pension, long-term incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, unemployability supplement where dependant		
(a) is living with claimant	55.65	56.20
(b) still qualifies for the tapered earnings rule	45.09	45.09
state pension, long-term incapacity benefit and unemployability supplement where dependant not living with claimant	47.65	49.15
severe disablement allowance where dependant not living with claimant	44.35	45.70
carers allowance	26.65	27.50
Child dependency increases level at which CDIs are affected by earnings of claimant's spouse or partner	26.50	27.30
for first child	165.00	170.00
for each subsequent child	21.00	22.00

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2004	Rates 2005
HOSPITAL DOWNRATING		
20% rate	15.90	16.40
38% rate	30.25	31.20
HOUSING BENEFIT		
Personal allowances		
single		
16 to 24	44.05	44.50
25 or over	55.65	56.20
lone parent		
under 18	44.05	44.50
18 or over	55.65	56.20
couple		
both under 18	66.50	67.15
one or both 18 or over	87.30	88.15
dependent children		
from birth to September following 16th birthday	42.27	43.88
from September following 16th birthday to day before 19th birthday	42.27	43.88
pensioner (from October 2003)		
single lone parent—60–64	105.45	109.45
couple—one or both 60–64	160.95	167.05
single/lone parent—65 and over	121.00	125.90
couple—one or both 65 and over	181.20	188.60
Premiums		
family	15.95	16.10
family (lone parent rate)	22.20	22.20
child under 1	10.50	10.50
pensioner		
single	49.80	53.25
couple	73.65	78.90
pensioner (enhanced)		
single	49.80	53.25
couple	73.65	78.90
pensioner (higher)		
single	49.80	53.25
couple	73.65	78.90
disability		
single	23.70	23.95
couple	33.85	16.90
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.60	11.70
disabled child rate	17.08	17.71
couple rate	16.75	16.90
severe disability		
single	44.15	45.50
couple (lower rate)	44.15	45.50
couple (higher rate)	88.30	91.00
disabled child	42.49	43.89
carer	25.55	25.80
bereavement	23.95	25.85
Allowance for personal expenses for claimants in hospital		
higher rate	19.90	20.50
lower rate	15.90	16.40
Non-dependant deductions, rent rebates and allowances, aged 25 and over, in receipt of Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance aged 18 or over, not in remunerative work		
— gross income less than £101	7.40	7.40
aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: less than £101	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £101 to £149.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £150 to £193.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £194 to £257.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £258 to £321.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £322 and above	47.75	47.75
Service charges for fuel		
heating	9.80	10.55
hot water	1.20	1.25
lighting	0.80	0.85
cooking	1.20	1.25
Amount ineligible for meals		
three or more meals a day		
single claimant	19.85	20.05
each person in family aged 16 or over	19.85	20.05
each child under 16	10.05	10.15
less than three meals a day		
single claimant	13.20	13.35
each person in family aged 16 or over	13.20	13.35
each child under 16	6.55	6.70
breakfast only—claimant and each member of family	2.45	2.45
Capital		
upper limit	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit (claimant/partner 60 or over)	16,000.00	16,000.00
upper limit (PC guarantee) from Oct 2003	No limit	No limit
amount disregarded (claimant/partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00
child disregard	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit of RC/NH	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded of RC/NH	10,000.00	10,000.00
Tariff income		
£1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Tariff income (claimant/partner 60 or over) from Oct 2003		
£1 for every £500 or part thereof between amount of capital disregard and capital upper limit		
Earnings disregards		
where disability premium awarded	20.00	20.00
various specified employments	20.00	20.00
lone parent	25.00	25.00
where the claimant has a partner	10.00	10.00
single claimant	5.00	5.00
where carer premium awarded	20.00	20.00
childcare charges	135.50	175.00
childcare charges (2 or more children)	200.00	300.00
Other income disregards		
maintenance disregard	15.00	15.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme		10.00
certain voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
30/16 hour disregard	12.32	14.50
Expenses for subtenants		
furnished or unfurnished	4.00	4.00
where heating is included, additional	9.80	10.55
Maximum rates for recovery of overpayments		
ordinary overpayments	8.40	8.55
where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.20
INCAPACITY BENEFIT		
Long-term Incapacity Benefit	74.15	76.45
Short-term Incapacity Benefit (under pension age)		
lower rate	55.90	57.65
higher rate	66.15	68.20
Short-term Incapacity Benefit (over state pension age)		
lower rate	71.15	73.35
higher rate	74.15	76.45
Increase of Long-term Incapacity Benefit for age		
higher rate	15.55	16.05
lower rate	7.80	8.05
Invalidity Allowance (Transitional)		
higher rate	15.55	16.05
middle rate	10.00	10.30
lower rate	5.00	5.15
INCOME SUPPORT		
Personal Allowances		
single		
under 18—usual rate	33.50	33.85
under 18—higher rate payable in specific circumstances	44.05	44.50
18 to 24	44.05	44.50
25 or over	55.65	56.20
lone parent		
under 18—usual rate	33.50	33.85
under 18—higher rate payable in specific circumstances	44.05	44.50
18 or over	55.65	56.20
couple		
both under 18	33.50	33.85
both under 18, one disabled	44.05	44.50
both under 18, with responsibility for a child	66.50	67.15
one under 18, one 18–24	44.05	44.50
one under 18, one 25+	55.65	56.20
both 18 or over	87.30	88.15

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2004	Rates 2005
dependent children		
birth to September following 16th birthday	42.27	43.88
from September following 16th birthday to day before 19th birthday	42.27	43.88
Premiums		
family	15.95	16.10
family (lone parent rate)	15.95	16.10
pensioner couple	73.65	78.90
pensioner (enhanced) couple	73.65	78.90
pensioner (higher) couple	73.65	78.90
disability		
single	23.70	23.95
couple	33.85	34.20
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.60	11.70
disabled child rate	17.08	17.71
couple rate	16.75	16.90
severe disability		
single	44.15	45.50
couple (lower rate)	44.15	45.50
couple (higher rate)	88.30	91.00
disabled child	42.49	43.89
carer	25.55	25.80
bereavement	23.95	25.85
Allowances for personal expenses for claimants in hospital:		
higher rate	19.90	20.50
lower rate	15.90	16.40
Housing costs		
deduction for non-dependants aged 25 and over, in receipt of Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance aged 18 or over, not in work	7.40	7.40
aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: less than £101	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £101 to £149.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £150 to £193.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £194 to £257.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £258 to £321.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £322 and above	47.75	47.75
Deduction for direct payments, arrears of housing, fuel and water costs, council tax and fines default, and	2.80	2.85
Deductions for child maintenance (standard)	5.60	5.70
Deductions for child maintenance (lower)	2.80	2.85
Arrears of Community Charge		
court order against claimant	2.80	2.85
court order against couple	4.40	4.45
Third party deductions personal expenses allowance	18.10	18.80
Maximum rates for recovery of overpayments		
ordinary overpayments	8.40	8.55
where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.20
Reduction in benefit for strikers	30.00	30.50
Capital		
upper limit	8,000.00	8,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit (partner 60 or over)	12,000.00	12,000.00
amount disregarded (partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00
child's limit	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit (RC/NH)	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded (RC/NH)	10,000.00	10,000.00
Tariff income £1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Disregards		
standard earnings	5.00	5.00
couples earnings	10.00	10.00
higher earnings	20.00	20.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme		10.00
voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
Expenses for subtenants, furnished or unfurnished where heating is included, additional	4.00	4.00
	9.80	10.55
INDUSTRIAL DEATH BENEFIT		
Widow's pension		
higher rate	79.60	82.05
lower rate	23.88	24.62
Widower's pension	79.60	82.05

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2004	Rates 2005
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES DISABLEMENT PENSION		
18 and over, or under 18 with dependants		
100%	120.10	123.80
90%	108.09	111.42
80%	96.08	99.04
70%	84.07	86.66
60%	72.06	74.28
50%	60.05	61.90
40%	48.04	49.52
30%	36.03	37.14
20%	24.02	24.76
Under 18		
100%	73.55	75.85
90%	66.20	68.27
80%	58.84	60.68
70%	51.49	53.10
60%	44.13	45.51
50%	36.78	37.93
40%	29.42	30.34
30%	22.07	22.76
20%	14.71	15.17
Maximum life gratuity (lump sum)	7,980.00	8,230.00
Unemployability Supplement	74.15	76.45
plus where appropriate an increase for early incapacity		
higher rate	15.55	16.05
middle rate	10.00	10.30
lower rate	5.00	5.15
Maximum reduced earnings allowance	48.04	49.52
Maximum retirement allowance	12.01	12.38
Constant attendance allowance		
exceptional rate	96.20	99.20
intermediate rate	72.15	74.40
normal maximum rate	48.10	49.60
part-time rate	24.05	24.80
Exceptionally severe disablement allowance	48.10	49.60
JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE		
Contribution based JSA – Personal rates		
under 18	33.50	33.85
18 to 24	44.05	44.50
25 or over	55.65	56.20
Income-based JSA – personal allowances		
under 18	33.50	33.85
18 to 24	44.05	44.50
25 or over	55.65	56.20
lone parent		
under 18 – usual rate	33.50	33.85
under 18 – higher rate payable in specific circumstances	44.05	44.50
18 or over	55.65	56.20
couple		
both under 18	33.50	33.85
both under 18, one disabled	44.05	44.50
both under 18, with responsibility for a child	66.50	67.15
one under 18, one 18–24	44.05	44.50
one under 18, one 25+	55.65	56.20
both 18 or over	87.30	88.15
dependent children from birth to September following 16th birthday	42.27	43.88
from September following 16th birthday to day before 19th birthday	42.27	43.88
Premiums		
family	15.95	16.10
family (lone parent rate)	15.95	16.10
pensioner		
single	49.80	53.25
couple	73.65	78.90
pensioner (enhanced) couple	73.65	78.90
pensioner (higher)		
single	49.80	53.25
couple	73.65	78.90
disability		
single	23.70	23.95
couple	33.85	34.20
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.60	11.70
disabled child rate	17.08	17.71
couple rate	16.75	16.90
severe disability		
single	44.15	45.50
couple (lower rate)	44.15	45.50
couple (higher rate)	88.30	91.00
disabled child	42.49	43.89
carer	25.55	25.80

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2004	Rates 2005
bereavement	23.95	25.85
Allowances for personal expenses for claimants in hospital		
higher rate	19.35	20.50
lower rate	15.90	16.40
Housing costs		
deduction for non-dependants aged 25 and over, in receipt of Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance aged 18 or over, not in remunerative work	7.40	7.40
aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: less than £101	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £101 to £149.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £150 to £193.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £194 to £257.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £258 to £321.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £322 and above	47.75	47.75
Deduction for direct payments		
Deductions from JSA (IB) arrears of housing, fuel and water costs, council tax and fines default, and	2.80	2.85
Deductions for Child Maintenance		
deductions for child maintenance (standard)	5.60	5.70
deductions for child maintenance (lower)	2.80	2.85
Arrears of Community Charge		
court order against claimant	2.80	2.85
court order against couple	4.40	4.45
Third party deductions		
personal expenses allowance	18.10	18.80
Deductions from JSA (continued)		
Arrears of Community Charge, Council Tax, fines and overpayment recovery		
Age 16–17	11.16	11.28
Age 18–24	14.68	14.83
Age 25 +	18.55	18.73
Maximum deduction for arrears of Child Support Maintenance		
Age 16–17	11.16	11.28
Age 18–24	14.68	14.83
Age 25 +	18.55	18.73
Maximum rates for recovery of overpayments in JSA(ib)		
ordinary overpayments	8.40	8.55
where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.20
Reduction in benefit for strikers	30.00	30.50
Capital		
upper limit	8,000.00	8,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	3,000.00
child's limit	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit (RC/NH)	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded (RC/NH)	10,000.00	10,000.00
upper limit (partner 60 or over)	12,000.00	12,000.00
amount disregarded (partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00
Tariff income		
£1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Disregards		
standard earnings	5.00	5.00
couples earnings	10.00	10.00
higher earnings	20.00	20.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme		10.00
voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
Expenses for subtenants		
furnished or unfurnished	4.00	4.00
where heating is included, additional	9.80	10.55

MATERNITY ALLOWANCE

Standard rate	102.80	106.00
MA threshold	30.00	30.00

PENSION CREDIT

Standard minimum guarantee		
single	105.45	109.45
couple	160.95	167.05
Additional amount for severe disability		
single	44.15	45.50
couple (one qualifies)	44.15	45.50
couple (both qualify)	88.30	91.00
Additional amount for carers	25.55	25.80

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2004	Rates 2005
Savings credit		
threshold—single	79.60	82.05
threshold—couple	127.25	131.20
maximum—single	15.51	16.44
maximum—couple	20.22	21.51
Capital		
Amount disregard	6,000.00	6,000.00
Amount disregard—care homes	10,000.00	10,000.00
Deemed income		
£1 for each complete £500 or part thereof in excess of above amounts		
Housing costs		
Deduction for non-dependents		
— aged 18 or over, not in work or in work and in receipt of Pension Credit	7.40	7.40
— aged 18 or over and in work:		
aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: less than £101	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £101 to £149.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £150 to £193.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £194 to £257.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £258 to £321.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £322 and above	47.75	47.75
Amount for claimant and first spouse in polygamous marriage	160.95	167.05
Additional amount for additional spouse	55.50	57.60
Disregards		
Standard earnings	5.00	5.00
Couples earnings	10.00	10.00
Higher earnings	20.00	20.00
War disablement pension and War widows pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme		10.00
Widowed Parent's Allowance	10.00	10.00
Income from subtenants	20.00	20.00
Income from boarders (disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge)	20.00	20.00
Third Party Deductions		
arrears of housing, fuel, water costs, council tax and fines default	2.80	2.85
Arrears of Community Charge		
court order against claimant	2.80	2.85
court order against couple	4.40	4.45
Maximum rates of recovery of overpayments		
— ordinary overpayments	8.40	8.55
— where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.20
Third party deductions personal expenses allowance	18.10	8.80

PNEUMOCONIOSIS, BYSSINOSIS, AND MISCELLANEOUS DISEASES SCHEME AND THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (SUPPLEMENTATION)

Total disablement allowance and major incapacity allowance (maximum)	120.10	123.80
Partial disablement allowance	44.35	45.70
Unemployability supplement plus where appropriate increase for early incapacity	74.15	76.45
higher rate	15.55	16.05
middle rate	10.00	10.30
lower rate	5.00	5.15
Constant attendance allowance		
exceptional rate	96.20	99.20
intermediate rate	72.15	74.40
normal maximum rate	48.10	49.60
part-time rate	24.05	24.80
Exceptionally severe disablement allowance	48.10	49.60
Lesser incapacity allowance		
maximum rate of allowance	44.35	45.70
based on loss of earnings over	58.80	60.60

STATE PENSION

Category A or B	79.60	82.05
Category B (lower)—husband's insurance	47.65	49.15
Category C or D—non-contributory	47.65	49.15
Category C (lower)—non-contributory	28.50	29.40
Additional pension		Increase by 3.1%
Increments to:		Increase by
Basic pension		3.1%
Additional pension		3.1%
Graduated Retirement Benefit (GRB)		3.1%
Contracted-out Deduction from AP in respect of pre-April 1988 contracted-out earnings		Nil

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2004*	*Rates 2005*
Contracted-out Deduction from AP in respect of contracted-out earnings from April 1988 to 1997		3.0%
Graduated Retirement Benefit (unit)	0.0963	0.0993
Graduated Retirement Benefit (Inherited)		Increase by 3.1%
Addition at age 80	0.25	0.25
SEVERE DISABLEMENT ALLOWANCE		
Basic rate	44.80	46.20
Age-related addition (from Dec 1990)		
Higher rate	15.55	16.05
Middle rate	10.00	10.30
Lower rate	5.00	5.15
STATUTORY ADOPTION PAY		
Earnings threshold	79.00	82.00
Rate	102.80	106.00
STATUTORY MATERNITY PAY		
Earnings threshold	79.00	82.00
Standard rate	102.80	106.00
STATUTORY PATERNITY PAY		
Earnings threshold	79.00	82.00
Rate	102.80	106.00
STATUTORY SICK PAY		
Earnings threshold	79.00	82.00
Standard rate	66.15	68.20
WIDOW'S BENEFIT		
Widowed mother's allowance	79.60	82.05

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2004*	*Rates 2005*
Widow's pension		
standard rate	79.60	82.05
age-related		
age 54 (49)	74.03	76.31
53 (48)	68.46	70.56
52 (47)	62.88	64.82
51 (46)	57.31	59.08
50 (45)	51.74	53.33
49 (44)	46.17	47.59
48 (43)	40.60	41.85
47 (42)	35.02	36.10
46 (41)	29.45	30.36
45 (40)	23.88	24.62
Note: For deaths occurring before 11 April 1988 refer to age-points shown in brackets.		
BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT		
Bereavement payment (lump sum)	2,000.00	2,000.00
Widowed parent's allowance	79.60	82.05
Bereavement Allowance		
standard rate	79.60	82.05
age-related		
age 54	74.03	76.31
53	68.46	70.56
52	62.88	64.82
51	57.31	59.08
50	51.74	53.33
49	46.17	47.59
48	40.60	41.85
47	35.02	36.10
46	29.45	30.36
45	23.88	24.62

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 8 December 2004

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Pay Review Body

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I am pleased to announce that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has appointed Mrs. Alison Gallico, Professor Derek Leslie and retired Air Vice Marshall Ian Stewart, for a three-year term of office as members of the armed forces pay review body, commencing March 2005. These appointments have been conducted in accordance with the guidance of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): Today, I am pleased to announce that I have set the following performance targets for 2004-05 for the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science.

Delivery of Outputs

Fulfil commitments on time, within budget and to agreed standards of quality.

Overall delivery of milestones to exceed 90 per cent.

Customer Focus

Provide a high standard of services to the satisfaction of customers.

Increase the customer satisfaction survey overall score to 82 per cent.

Strong Science

Enhance scientific capability and reputation.

Achieve high standard of excellence based on indicators of scientific andtechnical quality.

Financial

Recover the full cost of our services and invest for the future.

100 per cent. cost recovery

Efficient, Cost Effective Operation

Operate with simple, reliable and effective processes.

Income growth to be at least 2 per cent. higher than support cost growth.

Investment in People

Respect and help the agency's people to develop.

Increase the annual staff survey satisfaction score to 64 per cent.

Five-year Strategy

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I am publishing today the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs five-year strategy, "Delivering the Essentials of Life". Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and are available from the Defra web site at: www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/5year-strategy/index.htm/.

Defra was created to integrate farming, rural and environment policy across the board. It already has a substantial track record of achievement. The new strategy shows how we plan to move forward in the priority areas of environmental leadership at all levels, caring for rural communities and delivering a sustainable future for farming.

This strategy sets out concrete measures to accelerate Britain's transformation from environmental laggard to environmental leader. The environment starts on our doorstep. Our Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill contains new powers to tackle the blight of litter, fly-tipping, graffiti and abandoned cars. We want to help make it easier for business and families to be green. Our new partnership with supermarkets will increase recycling by hundreds of thousands of tonnes. It sets out plans to tackle climate change through action to make our schools, our homes and our workplaces more energy-efficient and to help businesses save money by saving energy.

Defra was created to care for rural communities. We know that the priority issue for those who want to live or work in rural areas is the lack of affordable rural housing. So we are changing the planning guidance to make it easier to build affordable rural homes where they are needed.

We are already embarked in a partnership with farming for a sustainable future. The single farm payment and whole farm approach will create "one form, one date and one face from Government"—and is part of our promise to cut red tape.

Achieving this vision will mean Defra becoming a different kind of Department—focused on the successful achievement of clear outcomes, and with strengthened capacity for delivery. By March 2008 the core Department will be some 60 per cent. smaller than when Defra was created, a reduction from the 8,000 people in the core department when Defra was formed in 2001, to around 3,200 in 2008.

Taken together this sets out a prospectus to deliver real improvements across the wide range of our responsibilities.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Constitution for Europe

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I will today lay before the House Command Paper 6429, containing the final text of the EU constitutional treaty signed by Heads of State and Government in Rome on 29 October. Copies will be placed in the Library of the House and the Vote Office. The final treaty can also be accessed on the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk/.

An explanatory memorandum will be laid with the Command Paper. The White Papers (September 2003 Cm 5934 and September 2004 Cm 6309) give further information about the Government's negotiations on the text, and explanation of its contents.

TRANSPORT

Local Transport Plans and Accessibility Planning

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Charlotte Atkins): Today I am announcing the publication of new "Guidance on Local Transport Plans", and on "Accessibility Planning in Local Transport Plans". Most English local transport authorities outside London are required, by the Transport Act 2000, to prepare local transport plans in accordance with this statutory guidance. The guidance requires provisional local transport plans by July 2005 and final versions by March 2006.

The new guidance on local transport plans describes how the Government expect those authorities to plan and deliver better transport from 2006 to 2011. It aims to transform the vital public service of local transport planning, ensuring this service not only delivers solutions to local transport problems, but also delivers a range of other opportunities to people, and improves their wider quality of life. Most local authorities are required, in particular, to plan better access to employment and services for people at risk of social exclusion. This is the subject of the accompanying detailed guidance on accessibility planning.

As part of the Government's commitment to sustained investment in better local transport, I am also setting out, in the form of provisional planning guidelines for local highway maintenance and integrated transport, our intention to provide sustained and stable investment for smaller local authority transport schemes and maintenance schemes. These provisional planning guidelines, amounting to £6.5 billion over the period 2006–11, will help authorities to develop ambitious and realistic new local transport plans.

I have placed copies of the new guidance in the Libraries of both Houses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Sickness Absence

The Minister for Work (Jane Kennedy): In the spending review 2004 announcement my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked the former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) to undertake a review of long term sickness absence management in the public sector. He also asked the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Cabinet Secretary to review the current arrangements for the self certification of short-term absence in the civil service.

Many of the issues around managing attendance affect both long and short-term sickness absence. The two strands of work have therefore been brought together in a single review, produced jointly by the ministerial task force for health, safety and productivity and the Cabinet Office, following consultation with stakeholders. I have today placed a copy of the review in the Library.

We found evidence that good practice exists in a number of areas, but that previous initiatives to reduce sickness absence had failed to deliver their objectives. We have concluded that the main areas for further action are the need to:

- secure sustained commitment from managers at the top level;
- deliver the right data and systems to support better attendance management; and
- provide leadership and support for line managers;
- ensure regular and supportive contact for those who are absent due to sickness.

In combination, these are the factors that we identified in public and in private sector case studies as being central to successful absence management. We will also pilot a range of more specific ideas for managing short and long-term absence.

The taskforce will continue to have a role in making sure that the recommendations are implemented. The taskforce will draw up a delivery plan and monitor its implementation.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 9 December 2004

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Contingencies Act

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly): I am today launching the public consultation on the regulations and guidance in support of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which received Royal Assent on 18 November.

The Act and accompanying non-legislative measures will deliver a single framework for civil protection in the UK, modernising outdated legislation to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The purpose of the public consultation is to consider the suitability and content of the underpinning regulations and guidance for practitioners and is in accordance with the Government's commitment to launch the consultation shortly after Royal Assent.

Copies of the consultation document, the draft regulations and guidance will be placed in the Library of the House. They can also be viewed on the UK resilience website www.ukresilience.info/home.htm.

The consultation period will run until 3 March and is being carried out in accordance with the Cabinet Office code of practice on consultation. The final regulations and guidance will be drawn up in light of the responses to the consultation.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Electoral Commission Reports

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and I are jointly publishing today the Government response to the Electoral Commission's report "Voting for change".

In its report "Voting for change: An electoral law modernisation programme", the Electoral Commission has made a range of proposals and recommendations for electoral reform to address the needs of the voter and make elections more accessible, to protect the integrity of the democratic process, and to modernise electoral registers. The Commission advocates the modernisation of registers, which would involve the introduction of individual registration building blocks on which safe and secure arrangements for voting away from polling stations could be delivered.

Our response welcomes many of the Electoral Commission's recommendations and sets out our priorities for change. These are focussed on three key outcomes: engaging more people in the political process; building public confidence in the electoral system; and delivering electoral services in a way that is more efficient and more responsive to the needs of the voter.

We are committed to maintaining the security and integrity of the electoral process and to enhancing its openness and transparency. We will ensure that any innovative methods of voting that are introduced will be as secure, if not more secure, than the traditional methods. Specifically we are proposing, when parliamentary time allows:

To introduce measures to make ballot papers more secure.

To establish new offences around electoral fraud and personation.

To provide for clear English guidance to accompany postal ballot papers and for guidance tokey statutory forms to be available in different languages and alternative formats for those who need them.

To give greater access to observers at polling stations and at other stages of the electoralprocess, such as the count.

We are sympathetic to the principles of individual registration and appreciate the benefits that it might bring, but are concerned about maintaining a simple and clear system, and comprehensive registers. We are therefore considering the options to support voting away from polling stations with an approach that preserves the completeness and integrity of electoral registers.

We hope that the publication of this response will substantially move forward the modernisation agenda for elections.

Copies of this Government response to the Electoral Commission's report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEFENCE

Royal Air Force Manpower Drawdown

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence informed the House in his statement on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 348, that changes in the force structure of the RAF and the achievement of planned organisational efficiencies would lead to a reduced RAF trained manpower requirement of around 41,000 by 2008. I can now inform the House that the RAF has completed initial work on how this reduction will be achieved, while maintaining a satisfactory balance of personnel with the skills and experience levels throughout the service to enable the delivery of operational capability in a more flexible, deployable and responsive way.

The RAF will achieve the required reduction, from a current regular trained strength of around 48,900, through a balanced strategy of normal outflow, reduced recruitment and a targeted redundancy programme. The service is therefore reducing its recruitment targets by some 4,000 (to around 6,000 in total) over the next three financial years and has identified a need for some 2,750 redundancies over the same period. Redundancy will be effected by a compulsory scheme, for which applications will be invited. It is hoped that as many of the redundancies as possible will be applicants but, in order to ensure the long-term balance of ability and experience across the RAF, it may not be possible to accept all applications received, in which case, it may be necessary to select some non-applicants.

Applications for the first 450 redundancies are being invited today and those selected will leave the service by 31 March 2006. Details of the remaining redundancies (approximately 2,300), which are expected to be managed in two further phases, will be notified to RAF personnel when further work is complete.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning (Telecommunication Developments)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am seeking to place a renewed emphasis on the importance of both the local planning authority and network operators participating in the annual rollout discussion process described in the code of best practice on mobile phone network development. The importance of this was recognised in planning policy guidance note 8 telecommunications (revised) (PPG8) and the code of practice and has recently been emphasised by the all-party group on mobile phones (apMobile) in their report into planning procedures. The report recognised the benefits of local planning authorities and operators working with the local community to review annual roll out plans and to develop local strategies for telecommunication developments.

The Government believes that information sharing and negotiation at this early stage could greatly reduce the levels of concern and conflict when specific applications are submitted in line with the agreed local plan or strategy. Therefore, it is desirable that in their local development frameworks, local planning authorities consider how they plan to manage the developments needed to meet the growing demand for communication services. Where appropriate, authorities may need to consider developing a suitable policy basis for communication developments in their local development documents. Such policies must of course be in accordance with the national policy as set out in planning policy guidance note 8 telecommunications (revised).

I am also reiterating the importance of effective pre-application discussions, especially in the absence of an agreed communications plan or strategy. It is of course open to local planning authorities to charge for such discussions under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, if they consider it necessary or appropriate.

The code of best practice sets out the traffic light model which is designed to help network operators and their representatives to identify issues that might arise should a site be selected for a telecommunication development and to help the preparation of consultation strategies to address such issues. It is important that the rating under the traffic light model is discussed with the local planning authority. In red and amber rated areas this discussion should include consideration of the optional elements of the consultation strategy that will be undertaken by the applicant. In accordance with the code of best practice, it is reasonable for the local planning authority to expect evidence of the consultation undertaken should be provided as part of the supplementary information sent with an application.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned a study by the University of Reading and Arup to assess the impact that the code of best practice has had since its introduction and how local authorities have implemented the code and how the public perceives its operation. The mobile network operators have also commissioned the second independent review of their 10 commitments which will demonstrate in a quantitative way how their operations and procedures align with the requirements of the code. This will provide the Government with evidence on whether the code has been effective and whether there are any areas of weakness that need to be addressed. Informed by this evidence the Government will consider whether changes to the code are appropriate.

Finally, in respect of the Court of Appeal case, *First Secretary of State* v *T-Mobile and others* on 12 November, the court dismissed an appeal by the First Secretary of State against the decision of Sir Richard Tucker in relation to an application by T-Mobile for a shared mast in Harrogate. In essence the issue before the Court of Appeal was whether the judge in the High Court had dealt correctly with the extent to which public fears about the health risks arising from masts was material, when the development in question had the benefit of an ICNIRP certificate. Sir Richard had held that the inspector had misconstrued PPG8 when dealing with this issue in his decision letter.

The Court of Appeal gave consideration to the policy guidance in PPG8. Taking into account that advice, the court found the FSS' policy to mean that in cases where an ICNIRP certificate exists, only in exceptional circumstances would it be legitimate for a local planning authority to take public fears about health risks into account. They agreed with Sir Richard that the inspector had misconstrued this advice, and his decision was therefore flawed. We will be carefully reviewing the transcript of the judgment of Lord Justices Pill, Mummery and Laws before deciding what action may need to be taken in the light of this judgement.

Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be writing to all local planning authorities and licensed communications code system operators drawing their attention to this statement.

Candidates' Elections Expenses (City of London) Order 2005

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): The following draft statutory instrument, on which we are seeking the approval of both houses has now been laid before Parliament:

> The Representation of the People (Variation of Limits of Candidates' Elections Expenses) (City of London) Order 2005

Subject to parliamentary approval, the order would give effect to the Government's proposal to increase the maximum limits of candidates' election expenses for the City of London ward elections and elections by liverymen in common hall in line with changes in the value of money since the limits were last set in March 1997.

We have also placed in the House Library a summary of the responses, including those from the Electoral Commission and other key stakeholders, we received from a consultation on the draft instrument.

Electoral Commission

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs are jointly publishing today the Government response to the Electoral Commission's report "Delivering Democracy?".

In its report, the commission sets out its evaluation of the electoral pilots in June 2004. It found that:

- the elections were successfully delivered;
- there was no evidence that all-postal voting lead to an increase in fraud;
- a majority of more than 2:1 were either very or fairly satisfied with the all-postal votingarrangement in their pilot area.

The commission also found that voters wanted have choice about the way they vote. This is consistent with the Government's long term goal of multi-channel elections, including voters having the options of electronic, postal voting and voting in person.

We are not, however, persuaded by the commission's arguments that all-postal voting should not be pursued at UK elections. These are not supported by the outcome of the June elections, where turnout was substantially higher in the pilot regions and a large majority found the all-postal method acceptable. Furthermore, the turnout achieved in the north-east regional referendum underlined the value of all-postal voting in increasing participation.

In its report, the commission proposes the development of a new model of voting. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this work and will have regard to the progress of this work when assessing any new proposals for all-postal voting.

The Electoral Commission also indicated that it would not support pilots in May 2005 (or any at all until the new model is in use). We have decided not to issue a prospectus inviting applications for pilots in the county council elections in May 2005. It remains, however, open, at any time, to local authorities to apply to run all-postal pilots. The Government remain committed to a programme of electoral pilots in 2006 and subsequent years, including e-voting pilots.

We hope that the publication of this response will substantially move forward the modernisation agenda for elections.

Copies of this Government response to The Electoral Commission's report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Higher Education (Loans and Grants)

The Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education (Dr. Kim Howells): The level of support available to students in the academic year 2005–06 will be 2.5 per cent. higher than for 2004–05, in line with forecast price increases. I am placing two memoranda in the Library giving details of the new loan, grant and fee rates for 2005–06. Those rates set out in memorandum 1 will be incorporated in the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2005, which will cover support for eligible students under the current arrangements. Those set out in memorandum 2 will be incorporated in the Education (Mandatory Awards) Amendment Regulations 2005 and the Education (Student Loans) Amendment Regulations 2005, which will cover the very small number of students who in 2005–06 will still be receiving awards and loans under the pre-1998 arrangements. These regulations will all be laid before Parliament in due course.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Waste Regulations

The Minister for the Environment and Agri-environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): The Government is today publishing for consultation the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005. The main purposes of the draft regulations, and the associated draft commencement order, are (a) to repeal the exclusion in section 75(7)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and (b) to apply to agricultural waste, and to non-mineral waste from mines and quarries, the national controls that are already in place to comply with the waste framework directive (75/442/EEC as amended by 91/156/EEC and Commission decision 96/350/EC) and the landfill directive (1999/31/EC).

The exclusion in section 75(7)(c) of the 1990 Act is the subject of infraction proceedings and the European Commission has applied to the European Court of Justice for a declaration that it contravenes the waste framework directive. The exclusion is also the subject of infraction on the landfill directive. The Government has accepted that the exclusion contravenes the directives and has given a commitment to repeal it and to introduce, after consultation, the regulations necessary:

- to apply the existing waste management controls which the UK has in place to transpose the requirements of the directives;
- to waste which is at present excluded from the definition of "controlled waste" under section 75(7)(c) of the 1990 Act; and
- which is not excluded from control under the directives by article 2 of the waste framework directive.

The main subject of the draft regulations is agricultural waste. At present, most agricultural waste is disposed of on-farm in an unregulated way—by open burning, by burial or by disposal in "farm dumps". The objective of the draft regulations is to ensure that agricultural waste is managed and recovered or disposed of in ways which protect the environment and human health. The controls will be enforced by the Environment Agency, as the "competent authority" in England and Wales, in ways which are proportionate to the risk to the environment and human health. The existing controls have applied to all other sectors of industry and types of waste since May 1994 in the case of the waste framework directive; and since June 2002 in the case of the landfill directive.

The Government proposes to make the regulations under section 2 of the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 and the consultation is being carried out in compliance with section 2(4) of the Act. The draft regulations fulfil the commitments made by the Government in the *Action Plan For Farming* which is available on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/agendtwo/strategy/action.htm; and

they have been developed in consultation with the *Agricultural Waste Stakeholders' Forum* whose membership and terms of reference are available at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/agforum/index.htm.

The draft regulations are being published for a 14-week consultation period with responses being invited by 18 March 2005. The consultation paper includes a partial regulatory impact assessment. A summary of the consultation paper, with a pull-out questionnaire, is being sent to 162,000 farmers and growers in England and Wales. Both the consultation paper and the summary are available on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/default.asp.

The Government has agreed to provide up to £1 million over 2005–2008 from the business resource efficiency and waste (BREW) programme to help improve the sustainability of agricultural waste management following the application of the directives' controls to the agricultural industry.

The draft regulations also contain some related or consequential amendments to existing regulations. The main such amendments are:

(a) To ensure continuing compliance with the waste framework directive following the repeal of the animal waste directive (90/667/EEC) and the introduction of the EU Animal By-Products Regulation ((EC) No. 1774/2002) which lays down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption. The proposed amendments apply to animal by-products which are waste within the meaning of article l(a) of the waste framework directive and are not excluded from the directive's scope under article 2; and

(b) To repeal regulation 15 of the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 and to amend the Groundwater Regulations 1998 to bring waste management licensing into line with other types of "authorisations" for the purposes of complying with the groundwater directive (80/68/EEC).

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Export Licence Application

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): On 30 November 2004 the Government issued a licence for the export of training ammunition to the security department of the US embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Training ammunition is non-lethal, allowing for practice shooting without risk of serious injury. In this case, the equipment was for training purposes in support of the day-to-day protection of embassy personnel.

An EU arms embargo has been in place against Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1996. The purpose of the embargo is to aid the establishment of peace and stability for the people of the region, taking into account the need to ensure the safety of international troops and civilian personnel deployed.

We fully support the EU embargo. However, in limited circumstances, we are prepared to make exemptions where denying an export would frustrate the purposes of the embargo. I am confident that granting an exemption to allow for the protection of diplomatic personnel is consistent with the embargo's aim of establishing peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

HEALTH

Continuing Care

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): Today I am commissioning the development of a national consistent approach to assessment for fully funded national health service continuing care and announce the publication of the independent report on continuing care entitled "Continuing Health Care: Review, Revision and Restitution".

I would like to acknowledge the work during 2003–04 carried out in bringing together more than 95 health authority criteria into the legally compliant 28 strategic health authority (SHA) criteria which exist today. Having achieved this objective and significantly improved arrangements for assessing new cases, and having made good progress with the retrospective review of cases where people have been wrongly denied funding in the past, it is now practical to move forward and improve the system further.

The Department will work with the SHAs to build on all the good work done so far. Learning from good practice, we will produce a national approach to continuing care to improve consistency and ease of understanding. We want to help to achieve these aims. This does not constitute a break from past practice. As I have said before all the current criteria are fair and legal. It will however make the process easier to understand for practitioners and patients alike.

Shipman Inquiry

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): The fifth report of the Shipman inquiry, "Safeguarding Patients: Lessons from the Past—Proposals for the Future", Cm 6394, was published today, together with the Government's response to the inquiry's fourth report, "The Regulation of Controlled Drugs in the Community", Cm 6249. This follows the publication of reports on the extent of Harold Shipman's criminal activities; on the 1998 investigation by the Greater Manchester police; and on death certification and the coroner system. The inquiry is now working on a supplementary report to the first of those reports and hopes to publish this final element of its work early in the new year.

The Government express their profound thanks to Dame Janet Smith and her team for the care and attention that has gone into the preparation of each of her reports. We also reiterate our sympathy to the relatives and friends of Shipman's victims and express our thanks to them for their valuable contribution to the inquiry's work.

The Inquiry's Fourth Report

The inquiry's fourth report, published on 14 July 2004, analyses the means by which Harold Shipman was able to obtain his lethal armoury of controlled drugs and finds weaknesses both in current systems of control and in the ways in which those controls were operated. The report recommends strengthening current arrangements

in four main areas. First, it recommends a new integrated, multiprofessional inspectorate to inspect the management of controlled drugs in national health service primary care to replace the existing uncoordinated arrangements for inspection. Secondly, it recommends restrictions on the right of general practitioners to prescribe controlled drugs in certain circumstances, for example prescribing for oneself or one's immediate family or prescribing beyond the requirements of one's normal clinical practice. Thirdly, it recommends auditing the prescribing of controlled drugs in primary care and the movement of supplies of controlled drugs in the community. Fourthly it recommends, better information to patients on the special legal status of the controlled drugs that are prescribed for them.

The Government fully accept the need to improve current arrangements for the management of controlled drugs, and to do so in a way that does not hinder patients from accessing the treatment they need. We fully accept the great majority of the inquiry's recommendations and for the remainder we propose to achieve the same recommended ends by alternative action. Dame Janet Smith has seen our proposals, and is pleased that we have accepted the principles underlying her report, and that we intend to follow up her recommendations with rigorous action.

We will also follow through the implications of the inquiry's recommendations for other health care settings, including hospital care, the private sector, and care homes. Our proposals are set out in "Safer Management of Controlled Drugs—The Government's Response to the Fourth Report of the Shipman Inquiry", Cm 6434, which is published today.

We will make it clear that responsibility for the proper management of controlled drugs is an integral part of the clinical governance responsibility of all NHS and private sector health care organisations. We will develop improved arrangements for the inspection of controlled drugs that strengthen, rather than detract from, this proper local responsibility.

We will ensure that prescribing of controlled drugs—which in future will include prescribing by health care professionals other than doctors and dentists—takes place in the context of a general framework of good prescribing practice backed by clinical governance frameworks and appropriate professional regulatory sanctions.

We will also capture information on all prescribing and requisitioning of controlled drugs, including private prescribing, and provide analyses of prescribing patterns by prescriber and by patient for those operating the local controls. Information systems will be set up that will enable a full audit trail for the movement of controlled drugs into the community.

We will also ensure that patients receive appropriate information about controlled drugs in the context of an informed discussion with the health professionals involved in their care, and against a background of information about the safe handling of prescription medicines more generally.

Finally, we will support all these actions through improved education and continuous professional development for healthcare professionals dealing with controlled drugs.

The Inquiry's Fifth Report

In her fifth report, Dame Janet makes recommendations in the following areas: handling patients' complaints and whistleblowing concerns; the development of clinical governance in primary care; the availability of information about GPs; professional regulation of doctors and the role of the General Medical Council.

We have been working hard with the medical profession and others over the period since the conviction of Harold Shipman to strengthen the systems, rules and regulations that govern the medical profession and we are pleased that Dame Janet recognises the progress that has been made.

Dame Janet also welcomes the changes made to date in the NHS complaints procedure and in the increasing amount of information available about doctors' performance. She recognises the progress that has been made in developing systems for handling poor performance and aberrant conduct and the importance of continuing to develop clinical governance in primary care. Her recommendations build on all this work but also reflect her continuing concerns that, in some areas, there has been insufficient change to safeguard patients appropriately.

Dame Janet has made some very significant recommendations that would have a major impact on service delivery. We will need to study them carefully and discuss them with a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties. We also want to consider them alongside recommendations made in the recent inquiry reports into the activities of Clifford Ayling, Cm 6298, and Richard Neale, Cm 6315 both published on 9 September 2004.

Dame Janet has also made significant recommendations concerning the constitution and operation of the General Medical Council. We have recently made changes to the constitution of the General Medical Council to ensure a far greater voice for patient interests. We will consider carefully the recommendations Dame Janet makes for further reform, and the implications of her recommendations for other regulatory bodies in health and social care. Changes to the General Medical Council's disciplinary procedures have also recently been made and came into force only last month. We will consider carefully with the General Medical Council the recommendations in the report for further changes to these procedures.

The scale of Shipman's crimes was unprecedented and his activities were totally abhorrent. No sanctions will stop conduct like that of Shipman so our energies must be focused on prevention and early identification of problems. Standards of behaviour must be high and action against those who fail to maintain those standards must be timely, firm and fair.

In welcoming the inquiry's previous reports, my right hon. Friends the Home Secretary and the then Secretary of State for Health emphasised the need to learn lessons from the mistakes of the past. All of Dame Janet's reports have provided us with an expert and detailed analysis of where systems failed. We are determined to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to provide the safeguards that are needed and that the public rightly expect.

HOME DEPARTMENT

United States and United Kingdom Science and Technology Agreement

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett): As part of the continuing commitment to prepare and protect the UK, I have signed a memorandum of agreement with the US for co-operation in science and technology for critical infrastructure protection and other homeland security matters.

The agreement establishes a framework for co-operation in science and technology and formalises the UK's strong relationship with the US in scientific research and development. This includes: sharing scientific knowledge; increasing the exchange of information and personnel with expertise in these areas; and taking advantage of each country's respective research, development, testing and evaluation capacities.

The agreement represents the continuing commitment by the UK and the US to share knowledge, expertise and research in addition to development, testing and evaluation capabilities that will help us find the best technologies and tools to prepare and protect our citizens.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Spellar): Earlier today I placed in the Libraries copies of the annual report on the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (RDS) covering the period 2003–04.

Implementation of the RDS is not simply a process for the Department for Regional Development. It is a shared process involving a wide variety of public and private organisations, businesses, voluntary and community organisations and individuals. Annual reporting on the implementation of the RDS involves assessment of progress being made against a number of critical threshold indicators (CTIs), and each of the strategic planning guidelines (SPGs) contained within the strategy.

The RDS sets out a regional brownfield target of 60 per cent. by 2010 for towns with populations of more than 5,000. Recent information provided by the Department of the Environment shows a fall from almost 88 per cent. in 2001–02 to 81 per cent. in the period 2002–03.

Progress is also measured against each of the SPGs. This information is published annually in the monitoring report and is available on the Department's website. With only three years monitoring it is not possible to draw any significant conclusions on the data collected so far.

During 2003 and 2004, the Department engaged with a wide range of stakeholders in the public and private sectors and in the community. A series of four sub-regional seminars were held in the north-west, the south-east, the west rural and the north-east. The aim was to identify the development needs of sub-regions, and to examine the potential of the RDS to provide a framework through which these needs could be addressed.

The Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 requires the Department to examine emerging development plans for "general conformity" with the RDS. In March 2004, the Department received the draft Magherafelt area plan for consideration and a statement of general conformity was issued in the same month.

The annual report comments on the RDS commitment to a five-year review, a focused assessment of the strategy to be carried out in the period 2005–06. The purpose of this focused assessment is to consider any aspects of the RDS where in-course adjustments to strategic guidance would be important prior to a major review at the 10-year point. Work has already commenced on a review of regional housing figures and I expect to make an announcement on this shortly. The focused assessment process will provide the opportunity for consultation on the outcome of this housing work.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Autumn Performance Report

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): I am pleased to announce the publication of the department for Work and Pensions autumn performance report. The report is intended to supplement the Department's annual report published in April 2004 (Cm 6221).

The report provides the latest account of how the Department is performing against its public service agreement targets. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 13 December 2004

CABINET OFFICE

Autumn Performance Report

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly): I have today published the Cabinet Office 2004 autumn performance report (Cm 6414). Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

TREASURY

Public Service Pensions

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Paul Boateng): Legislation governing public service pensions requires public service pensions to be increased annually by the same percentage as additional pensions, state earnings-related pension and state second pension. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced on 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 906 that benefits such as additional pensions will be increased by 3.1 per cent., in line with the annual increase in the retail prices index up to September 2004. Public service pensions will therefore be increased by 3.1 per cent. from 11 April 2005, except those which have been in payment for less than a year, which will receive a pro-rata increase.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Burnside Farm Video

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): I would like to set out the record of events surrounding the video taken on Burnside Farm in February 2001, following the point of order raised by the hon. Member for South-East Cambridgeshire (Mr. Paice), on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1469, about a video made at Burnside Farm.

The video in question was recorded by Northumberland county council on 24 and 27 February 2001 following the discovery of foot and mouth on Burnside Farm. Defra (then MAFF) officials were aware of the video being made, as they were present on the farm on those two dates.

The video was used in evidence by Northumberland county council against Robert Waugh, the occupier of the farm, at his trial in May 2002. Defra officials, who gave evidence at the trial, saw the video as part of the court proceedings. Northumberland county council say they did not release the video before the trial because of sub-judice rules.

The video was made widely available to the media immediately after the trial and extracts from it were shown on the television news. Lord Whitty and Elliot Morley, both Ministers in Defra at the time, recall seeing extracts from the video on the news at that time.

We have a record of a Defra official seeing the video again on 2 October 2002, at the offices of Northumberland county council, during preparations for the trial of Mr Scurr, the haulier, who had an association with Burnside Farm. The Defra official had already seen the video at Robert Waugh's trial and had requested a copy of it then.

He made a further request after the October viewing and was sent a copy of the video on 18 February 2003.

Officials at the Institute for Animal Health, Pirbright, who had been involved in the epidemiological investigation into the FMD outbreak, had obtained a copy of the video from Northumberland county council for training purposes after the Waugh trial. A Defra official saw the video at Pirbright in October 2002 and subsequently asked Northumberland county council for a copy. This was sent to him at the beginning of February 2003.

As a result of correspondence received by Defra in September this year and the recent media and parliamentary interest in the video, Defra officials, who were unaware that copies had already been sent to two Defra officials separately in February 2003, asked Northumberland county council for copies of the video. These were received in Newcastle animal health divisional office on 1 October.

This was the basis of my answer on 9 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 576W. The letter from Lord Whitty of 17 November to the Countess of Mar, referred to in the hon. Member for South-East Cambridgeshire's point of order, was based on the information that was discovered subsequently that two Defra officials had in fact received copies of the video in February 2003. As soon as this information was brought to my attention, my reply of 9 November was corrected in the pursuant answer tabled on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 2000W.

So, the suggestion of a cover up of the video is not supported by the facts. The video was made by and was the property of Northumberland county council. The council made the video for use in evidence against the occupier of the farm, Mr Waugh, at his trial. The video was first put in the public domain by Northumberland county council in May 2002 and it was shown widely in the television news media at that time.

The suggestion has been made that the video shows a dog pulling at a sheep carcase, which, it is claimed, casts doubt on the epidemiological evidence about the origin of the outbreak presented to the lessons to be learned inquiry, chaired by Dr Anderson. This is also not borne out by the facts. I am advised that it is not possible to identify with certainty the material in question. That is why the eye-witness evidence, collected meticulously by Defra, IAH and local authority officials who were actually present on the farm at the time should be considered paramount. This was the evidence presented to the Anderson inquiry, augmented by interviews conducted by Dr Anderson himself. It is worth recalling

that Mr Waugh was prosecuted for leaving part of a dead pig lying on his premises. No sheep carcases were found anywhere on the farm. Furthermore, no clear evidence of infection has been found anywhere in the UK earlier than that at Burnside Farm.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste Substitution

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): The Government's updated policy on the substitution of intermediate level radioactive wastes has been published today. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The statement is also available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Employer Task Force on Pensions Report

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): I am today pleased to publish the Employer Task Force on Pensions report. I would like to thank Sir Peter Davis (Chair), Dr. David Alien (Vice Chair) and the task force members for their work on this important issue.

The Employer Task Force on Pensions was set up with a specific remit to increase and extend occupational and private pension provision. The task force's members represented a wide range of businesses. There was also trade union representation.

The Task Force's report sets out a clear and comprehensive recommendation to help reinvigorate employer pension provision. It is supported by a good practice guide that contains an important source of practical information for employers. The task force have also published, in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development a good practice guide on communications.

The report sets out the task force's view on the measures those involved in the pension partnership need to take to re-invigorate voluntary savings. This is an important contribution to the debate over the future pensions challenge.

The report also makes clear that we need to do more to encourage individual understanding and to make pensions more user-friendly, so more people will take up and value the help that their employer provides. We are pleased that the task force has welcomed measures to increase awareness through the work of the Informed Choice Programme and FSA Financial Capability Strategy.

The report also makes clear that individuals must take responsibility for themselves and value the help that their employer provides. We are pleased that the Task Force has welcomed measures to increase awareness through the work of the Informed Choice Programme and FSA Financial Capability Strategy.

The Employer Task Force has also made recommendations for the Government. We will consider these alongside the work of the Pensions Commission. But, where we can make more rapid progress we will.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury has already announced forthcoming deregulatory changes to the financial promotion regime [under the Financial Services and Marketing Act 2000 (FSMA)] so that employers who make a contribution to an employer-based group personal pension scheme or stakeholder pension scheme can promote the scheme to their staff. The Employer Task Force has welcomed this announcement.

The Employer Task Force has also raised concerns about the availability of long-term assets to back annuities and has welcomed a recent Government announcement instructing the UK Debt Management Office to consult the market on the possible introduction of ultra-long (circa 50-year maturity) gilts, possibly in annuity format.

The Employer Task Force's work on good practice provides excellent examples of what employers are already doing to promote their pensions and provides a valuable tool for other employers. We will therefore be acting on the task force recommendation that the Government set up a website drawing together all the work that has been done in this area.

We also recognise that small employers face specific issues. We welcome the task force's recommendation to improve access to pension information for small business through a web portal. Next year we will be testing and evaluating improved information services to support small employers.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 14 December 2004

TREASURY

Exploitation of Tax Rules

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Legislation to prevent companies bringing forward tax relief for losses prior to transition to international accounting standards is to be included in the Finance Bill 2005. The legislation applies to losses arising on transactions that are designed to accelerate relief that would otherwise be deferred. The changes will have effect from today.

A copy of today's Inland Revenue news release giving the relevant background to this measure has been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and is accessible on the Inland Revenue's website at: http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Supreme Court Building

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): The following statement has been made by my noble Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor

"The location and the setting for the UK Supreme Court should be a reflection of its importance and its place at the apex of the justice system, and the heart of the constitution. Providing the Supreme Court with its own building provides a physical demonstration of the separation between the judiciary and the legislature. Establishing the Supreme Court in the Palace of Westminster would be entirely inappropriate.

Following an extensive search and evaluation of potential sites in central London, I am today announcing that Middlesex Guildhall is my preferred option for housing the Supreme Court.

There are three key reasons for this decision:

its location on Parliament Square will mean that the judiciary, the legislature, the executive and the Church are each represented on the four sides of the square enhancing its position atthe heart of our capital;

it is able to provide all the key design requirements of a modern Supreme Court and therefore represents a significant improvement on the Law Lords' current accommodation; and

it will deliver this much improved accommodation at a reasonable cost, demonstrating good value for money.

At this stage, I should stress that Middlesex Guildhall is my preferred option. As the detailed designs are developed, I will need to remain satisfied that they fully meet the operational requirements of a modern Supreme Court. This will, of course, require the normal planning approvals and my officials are consulting with English Heritage and Westminster city council on the development of the designs. The Law Lords have continuing reservations as to the suitability of this building to house the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. I will continue to consult with them closely on the issues.

The Design Proposals

The building for the new Supreme Court needs to meet the statement of requirements that was agreed with Lord Bingham of Cornhill in August 2003 and subsequently developed in discussion with the Law Lords' Supreme Court Sub-Committee, chaired by Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead. The headline requirement is for a building that measures at least 3,500 square metres, including sufficient space to enable co-location with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (currently based in Downing Street).

My view is that Middlesex Guildhall meets the statement of requirements and would enable much better facilities to be provided than the current arrangements. The proposals for this self-contained and dedicated building include:

three large hearing rooms, measuring between 143 and 190 square metres. This compares with 94 square metres for House of Lords Committee Room One;

greatly improved public access: we will ensure that both UK citizens and visitors from overseas have the opportunity to see the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom at work. The hearing rooms will provide approximately twice the number of public seats currently available in the Appellate Committee;

an education suite enabling information to be disseminated on the Supreme Court and providing the possibility of a live feed from the hearing rooms;

improved infrastructure, including better IT;

accommodation for the staff of the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. This includes space for additional research assistants and secretarial staff. This will enable greater support to be provided to the Supreme Court justices and improve case management;

14 large en-suite judicial chambers; and

a world-class law library with an area of approximately 250 square metres. Considerable additional space for library records and less used materials will be available in the basement.

We are developing these plans for the building in close consultation with the Law Lords, English Heritage and Westminster city council. We would of course need to apply for planning permission in the usual way. The city council is not in a position to accept the principle or the detail of the building scheme at this stage.

Delivering the Proposals

Providing the right building for the Supreme Court has financial implications. The cost of establishing the Supreme Court at Middlesex Guildhall will be approximately £30 million in current terms. This £30 million estimate contains two elements: base costs and optimism bias. The base costs are construction costs and statutory fees of £15 million; £2 million professional fees; and £3 million VAT. Those figures are then inflated by 50 per cent. optimism bias in accordance with HM Treasury guidance on financial appraisal and evaluation (the green book). The optimism bias is applied to building projects as a contingency to cover risks, unforeseen issues and changing project specifications.

But I also need to ensure that the criminal justice system is not adversely affected by the selection of Middlesex Guildhall. I have therefore considered a number of options for providing additional courtrooms and I am confident that the Middlesex work can be decanted while sustaining criminal justice performance. I will be discussing these decant plans in detail with the judiciary and criminal justice partners over the next few months. Provision of the additional courtrooms will cost a further £15 million in current terms (including optimism bias).

The approximate annual cash running costs following establishment of the Supreme Court would be £8.8 million (£8.4 million relating to the Supreme Court; the remainder being the ongoing costs from courtroom reprovision). This figure includes £2.1 million judicial remuneration; £1.1 million staff salaries; £1.0 million administrative costs; £0.4 million utilities and rates; and £3.8 million building costs (including capital charge/lease costs and building maintenance costs).

It is not entirely straightforward to separate the administrative costs of the Appellate Committee from the generality of expenditure in the House of Lords, but the approximate annual cost to the public purse of the current arrangements are just over £3.2 million per annum. This figure includes judicial and staff remuneration, and general administrative costs. The table below compares the current and estimated running costs.

Costs (£m)

	Appellate Committee Costs 2002–03	*Supreme Court Estimated Costs*
Judicial Salaries	2.1	2.1
Staff Salaries	0.6	1.1
Admin	0.4	1.0
Utilities and Rates	0.1	0.4
Building Costs		3.8
TOTAL	3.2	8.4

This is a complex project which will require delivery in two key stages: the provision of additional courtrooms needs to be completed before refurbishment work can begin on Middlesex Guildhall itself. While I need to be satisfied that both stages are completed to a high standard, my aim is to establish the Supreme Court as soon as practicable. I would therefore hope that the court's first sitting would be in 2008.

The Supreme Court would not be established until the building was ready for operation.

The Search and Evaluation Process

The search for the Supreme Court has involved:

reviewing the DCA estate in London;

considering any suitable properties on the Greater London Magistrates' Court Authority estate;

advice from the Office of Government Commerce on availability of property on the wide Government estate in London;

contacting 17 Whitehall Departments to determine whether any of their buildings would be suitable; and

commissioning professional agents to search commercially available property.

The search generated a long-list of 48 properties, five of which merited further consideration after closer scrutiny against a number of criteria (size, operational efficiency, adaptability, suitability). After a full Treasury green book appraisal of these five options, two properties—Middlesex Guildhall and the new wing of Somerset House—remained under active consideration.

In order to finalise the evaluation of the two options, more work was undertaken to identify how the current layouts could be adapted in order to meet the specific requirements of the Supreme Court (including engagement with the Law Lords, English Heritage and Westminster city council).

Of these two strong options, my decision that Middlesex Guildhall should be the preferred option was based on the three key reasons set out above: its location on Parliament Square; its fit with the Supreme Court requirements; and its value for money."

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Government Funding for Sport (2005–06 to 2007–08)

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): Today, I am pleased to announce the allocation of Government funding for sport through my Department for the next three financial years.

In 2005–06 funding for sport from the Exchequer will be £126.208 million, in 2006–07 it will be £149.708 million, and I am also making an indicative allocation of £155.163 million in 2007–08.

The total breaks down over the three-year cycle as follows:

2005–06—£126.208 million
2006–07—£149.708 million
2007–08—£155.163 million

In that time Sport England will receive:

2005–06—£88.916 million
2006–07—£88.916 million
2007–08—£88.916 million

UK Sport will receive:

2005–06—£29.566 million
2006–07—£29.566 million
2007–08—£29.566 million

The Football Licensing Authority will receive:

2005–06—£1.264 million
2006–07—£1.264 million
2007–08—£1.264 million

An allocation has been made within the settlement for other sport initiatives, including a possible National Sports Foundation. Exactly how this funding is to be divided has yet to be determined but in general terms it will be used to support development in terms of volunteering, participation, facilities and the identification and nurture of talented athletes. Lord Carter is to publish his report in February.

This settlement represents a good result for sport. Overall, it will release over £431million for sport between 2005–06 and 2007–08 from the Exchequer, and will see annual funding rise 31 per cent. from some

£118 million in 2004–05 to over £155 million in 2007–08. This will enable us both to strengthen the grass roots of sport, with a renewed emphasis on school and community sport, while also enabling us to identify and nurture a new generation of sporting champions as we build up to the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the possibility of a London Olympics in 2012.

I believe that this extra support will enable us to continue to progress towards our shared goal of creating an active and successful sporting nation.

The Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills, my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Twigg), has also made a statement today, on behalf of the Prime Minister and me, announcing another great boost for school sport.

Of the £431 million announced for sport in this statement, approximately £133.5 million will be used to support the aims and objectives set out in the statement made by the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

DEFENCE

Iraq

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am announcing today that we will shortly begin mobilising approximately 900 reservists to replace the existing reservists serving in support of operations in Iraq. These reservists will be beginning their deployments from April 2005 onwards.

We currently have some 750 Army reservists carrying out a range of activities including medical support, force protection duties and providing individual reinforcements to units. We anticipate that most of these tasks will continue, but the forthcoming replacement of the regular field hospital with one staffed by reservists, along with the number of individual reinforcements required by regular units will slightly increase the total reserves requirement. These changes mean that the number of Army reservists in theatre will be about 1,000 in May 2005, before reducing over the following months.

We aim to issue the call-out notices in phases following this announcement and plan on giving reserve personnel 28 days' notice of call-up (a minimum of 21 days). Mobilisation will be followed by a period of individual, pre-deployment and collective training, integration into receiving units, and then a short period of pre-deployment leave. The majority of those called-out can expect a deployed tour of six months and a total period of mobilisation, including post-tour leave, of about nine months, though for a few it may be slightly longer.

Between now and March we aim to identify those reservists who are believed to be fit and available for deployment. As is customary, to ensure that we successfully mobilise the required number, we will need to issue a greater number of call-out notices than the actual requirement.

This further call-up is fully consistent with the Government's stated policy of employing the reserves as an integral component of the armed forces.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Sport

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Stephen Twigg): The Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and I are today announcing another boost for school sport.

In 2002 the Government launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education (PE), school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million for delivery between 2003 and 2006. The aim—a public service agreement (PSA) target shared by the Departments for Education and Skills and for Culture, Media and Sport—is to:

> Enhance the take up of sporting opportunities by five to 16 year olds by increasing the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport, within and beyond the curriculum, from 25 per cent. in 2002 to 75 per cent. by 2006 and to 85 per cent. by 2008, and to at least 75 per cent. in each school sport partnership by 2008.

Spearheading action is the creation of a national network of at least 400 specialist sports colleges and school sport partnerships. There are now 291 colleges—including four academies with a sports focus and 54 per cent. of schools in England are within one of the 313 school sport partnerships, benefiting 3.5 million pupils in over 12,000 schools. All schools will be within a school sport partnership by 2006.

We are well on the way to delivering the PSA target. The 2003–04 survey of school sport partnerships found that 62 per cent. of pupils were spending two hours in a typical week on high quality PE and school sport. It also showed a 16 percentage point difference in take up of the two hour entitlement between pupils in the longest established partnerships and those newer to the programme. The results of the survey were published on 29 April and copies of the report—"The Impact of School Sport Partnerships"—are available in the Libraries of both Houses and at www.teachernet.gov.uk/pe.

This is good progress, but we want to do more. By 2010 our ambition is for all children to be offered at least four hours of sport every week, comprising at least two hours high quality PE and sport at school and the opportunity for at least a further two to three hours beyond the school day (delivered by a range of school, community and club providers). A further £519 million has been allocated—combined funding from the Departments for Education and Skills and for Culture, Media and Sport—to continue work on the national strategy from 2006–07 to 2007–08 to take us towards this ambition. That means in the five years up to 2008, including £686 million of dedicated lottery funding, Government investment in PE and school sport will have totalled over £1.5 billion.

Many of our 2012 Olympic and Paralympic medal winners are at school today. We are determined to make the pathway from playground to podium a reality for

these young people. As part of the additional investment, new competition managers will be put in place to work with school sport partnerships. These managers will strengthen the ladder of sporting opportunity by creating a competition structure across all ages, ranging from school based festivals to national competitions, this will give all children the chance to play competitive sport—whatever their age or ability. Our ultimate aim is to have one in each of our school sport partnerships by 2010.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is today announcing the allocation of Government funding for sport over the next three financial years. This money, together with the measures we have announced today, represents the best ever deal for sport in schools and will help us to achieve our goal of becoming a nation of sporting excellence.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Mutual Defence Agreement

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): The Amendment to the 1958 Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes (Cm 6261), which was laid before the House on 21 June 2004, entered into force on 9 December 2004. The Amendment extends the application of Article III (bis) of the Agreement for a further 10 years, until 2014.

HEALTH

Autumn Performance Report

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): Today I announce the publication of the Department of Health's 2004 autumn performance report (Cm 6417). Copies have been placed in the Library. It shows the progress my Department has made towards achieving its public service agreement targets.

The autumn performance report shows that there have been significant further improvements in access to services. The number of national health service patients waiting longer than 13 weeks for an outpatient appointment has fallen from 160,745 to 77,503 over the past year. In addition, the number of people waiting more than six months for an inpatient appointment fell from 163,230 to 69,638. During October 2004, 96.4 per cent. of all accident and emergency attenders were admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours of arrival. It is now possible to offer over 99 per cent. of patients a general practitioner appointment within two working days or a primary care professional appointment within one working day.

Patient satisfaction is increasing; the 2003–04 patient survey results showed that 98 per cent. of patients rated the care they received from ambulance trusts as excellent, very good or good, and the number of adult inpatients rating their care as excellent has increased by four percentage points since 2001–02.

Premature death rates from heart disease amongst people under 75 have fallen by 27.1 per cent. since the baseline of 1995–97; premature deaths from cancer have fallen by 12.2 per cent. over the same period. Suicide rates in England are now at their lowest level on record.

These are just some of the recent achievements of the NHS. These improvements have been made in a demanding year through the hard work, skills and passion of hundreds of thousands of staff in the NHS and its partner organisations, and the increased funding the Government are investing in the NHS.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Designated Register Offices

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Des Browne): The measures designed to stop "sham marriages" contained in sections 19–25 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004 will be introduced on 1 February 2005.

We will be designating 76 register offices in England and Wales under section 19(2) of the Act. These will be the register offices that everyone subject to immigration control will have to attend with their prospective spouse to give notice of marriage. A list of the offices can be found below.

Every registration office in Scotland and Northern Ireland will be a designated register office for this purpose.

From the same date, any person subject to immigration control will not be able to give notice of intention to marry unless:

- they have an entry clearance granted expressly for the purpose of marriage in the UK;
- or they have the written permission of the Secretary of State to marry in the UK—this will take the form of acertificate of approval which can be obtained from the Immigration and Nationality Department;
- or they fall within a class of persons specified by the Secretary of State.

Further details about the certificate of approval and the class of persons who will be exempt from these provisions will be available shortly.

LIST OF DESIGNATED OFFICES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

North East

Middlesbrough
Newcastle upon Tyne

North West

Blackburn with Darwen
Kendal
Carlisle
Manchester
Liverpool

Yorkshire and Humber

Hull
Leeds
Sheffield

East Midlands
Leicester
Lincolnshire (Lincoln)
Northampton
Nottingham

West Midlands
Birmingham
Coventry
Shrewsbury
Stoke on Trent

East England
Bury St Edmunds
Cambridge
Colchester
Dacorum (Hemel Hempstead)
Luton
Norwich
Peterborough

Greater London—Inner
Camden
Hackney
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Islington
Kensington and Chelsea
Lambeth
Lewisham
Newham
Southwark
Tower Hamlets
Wandsworth
Westminster

Greater London—Outer
Barking and Dagenham
Barnet
Brent
Croydon
Ealing
Enfield
Greenwich
Harrow
Havering
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Kingston upon Thames
Merton
Redbridge
Waltham Forest

South East
Brighton and Hove
Crawley
Hampshire North (Basingstoke)
Kent (Maidstone)
Milton Keynes
Oxfordshire (Oxford)
North Surrey (Weybridge)
Reading
Slough
Southampton

South West
Bristol
Exeter
Gloucester
Plymouth
Swindon
Truro

Wales
Aberconwy (Llandudno)
Cardiff
Cardiganshire North (Aberystwyth)
Mid Powys (Llandrindod Wells)
Pembrokeshire (Haverfordwest)
Swansea
Wrexham

NORTHERN IRELAND

Oversight Commissioner's Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Ian Pearson): I have today laid before the House a copy of the oversight commissioner's Third Statutory Report for the year 2004 which is being published today, in accordance with Section 68(4)(a) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

This is the third report compiled by Al Hutchinson as oversight commissioner and the twelfth in the series of oversight reports published since 2001.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Development Agencies' Output Levels

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Jacqui Smith): I have published the reported mid year tier three outputs for April to September 2004 for England's regional development agencies (RDAs). The RDAs have advised that they are broadly on track to achieve the annual targets set for 2004-05 in their corporate plans.

The figures cover the creation and safeguarding of jobs, the amount of brownfield land brought back into use, the number of businesses added to the regional economies, the number of learning opportunities created and the amount of private sector investment attracted benefiting deprived areas, all as a result of RDA activity.

Copies of the mid-year output results have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and the results have also been placed on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/rda/info/.

Age Discrimination: Treatment of Retirement Age

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Today my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and I are announcing how we will be implementing the age discrimination strand of the European Employment Directive (Council Directive 2000/78/EC) in relation to retirement age.

The Government have made it clear that we are strongly committed to tackling unjustified age discrimination in employment and vocational training. We believe that employees, and potential employees, must be judged on the talents and skills they bring to the workplace, and not on assumptions or stereotyped views based on their age, or apparent age. During the last few years, we have turned the tide on a trend that

was seeing people drop out of the labour market before state pension age, and we have also seen increasing numbers working beyond this age. These are welcome developments that must continue.

This country cannot afford to squander the skills and experience workers of any age have to offer, and demographic changes mean that employers who cut themselves off from a proportion of the skills pool on the basis of prejudice will lose out. We want to give individuals more choices about how long they work and when they retire. We have made these points in the pensions Green Paper "Simplicity, Security and Choice: Working and Saving for Retirement" (December 2002) and in the "Age Matters" consultation document on implementing the age discrimination strand of the directive (published in 2003), and elsewhere. Our age positive campaign has been working towards this since 1997, and increasingly employers themselves are realising the benefits of an age diverse workforce.

Arrangements are already in place, or will soon be in place, that facilitate more flexible approaches to retirement. With the abolition of the earnings rule in October 1989, the link between retirement and entitlement to the state pension was removed, and so people can continue working beyond state pension age and still receive their state pension. Individuals can also choose to continue working and defer their state pension, and the recent Pensions Act contains more generous options for deferral, to be introduced by 2005, including for the first time, the option of taking a lump sum. In April 2006, tax rules preventing people from drawing their occupational pension while continuing to work for the same employer will be abolished.

The age discrimination strand of the employment directive is due to be implemented by autumn 2006 and is an important part of this process. It will protect individuals against unfair discrimination when looking for work or in employment terms such as promotion arrangements, just because they are considered too young or too old.

The treatment of retirement age is an important aspect of the implementation of this legislation. We have consulted widely on this issue, both formally and informally, and have listened to a range of strongly held views. We have carefully balanced the arguments on all sides, and have decided that the legislation, which will come into force in autumn 2006, will provide for a national default retirement age of 65 and a right for employees to request working beyond the set retirement age. The decision to have a national default retirement age will be reviewed after five years.

In setting the default age, we have taken careful note of a number of representations we received in the course of consultations which made it clear that significant numbers of employers use a set retirement age as a necessary part of their workforce planning. While an increasing number of employers are able to organise their business around the best practice of having no set retirement age for all or particular groups of their workforce, some nevertheless still rely on it heavily.

Furthermore, our consultations have demonstrated that if all employers only had the option of individually justified retirement ages at the time the legislation was introduced, this could risk adverse consequences for occupational pension schemes and other work related benefits. Some employers would instead simply reduce or remove benefits they offer to employees to offset the increase in costs.

Until now, companies have been able to set the age at which their employees retire without any need to justify their choice. So employees may have had to retire at age 60 or even younger, whether or not they wished to continue working. Currently only 30 per cent. of people are in employment by the age of 65 and a major part of the response to the ageing society will be for more people to choose to work to that age.

Following the implementation of this decision, employers will only be able to set their own retirement age for all or some of their workforce below 65 where they can objectively justify this. They would be subject to challenge and would have to show that it was appropriate and necessary to do so.

The default age is not a compulsory retirement age. Employees will be able to work beyond that age wherever they and their employers agree. Indeed, the Government welcome such agreement, and through the right to request is actively encouraging it.

This decision on retirement age has no direct implications for occupational or state pension arrangements. The Government have emphasised that it has no plans to change the state pension age once it has been equalised for men and women at 65, and we shall continue to provide for pension schemes to set normal retirement ages if they need to.

The default age will be accompanied by a right for employees who want to continue to work beyond the default age or their employer's own justified retirement age to have their request considered seriously by their employer. This right will follow the model of the right to request flexible working for parents with young children, where it has been successful in changing the culture towards more family friendly working. This policy will ensure that employers listen to employees who want to keep working and think about whether they can agree. In doing so, it will help promote a culture change including on workforce plannin, and the design of employee benefits, and move towards a position where fixed retirement ages are relied on only where they can be objectively justified by the employer.

We will monitor the impact of the default age from the outset. Five years from implementation we will subject to formal review the question of whether this remains appropriate. The review will be firmly grounded in evidence, and amongst other things it will look at relevant data on trends in life expectancy; the number of individuals working beyond 65; and the impact of the regulations on business, including the evolution of business practice with respect to the degree of reliance on retirement ages for workforce planning. If at the point of the review the evidence suggested that we no longer needed the default retirement age at 65, we would abolish it.

In reaching this decision, we have taken into account the responses to age matters consultation. An analysis of those responses is available on the DTI website at: www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/age. We have also undertaken extensive consultation with key stakeholders.

We shall consult in summer 2005 on draft regulations covering the full rights against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training.

This will include details of the provisions on retirement age as well as how we propose to tackle the whole range of issues around age discrimination in recruitment, employment and vocational training. Subject to that consultation and the approval of Parliament, we will bring the legislation into force on 1 October 2006.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 15 December 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Clementi Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): The Government warmly welcomes Sir David Clementi's report on the future regulation of legal services in England and Wales. Sir David and his team deserve our thanks for all their work over the past 18 months.

I established Sir David's review to consider the regulation of legal services with the clear objective of improving the service to the consumer. The provision of legal services must include safeguarding the public's right to independent legal advice, and ensuring the quality and professionalism of the legal professions. Reform will be judged by the benefits it delivers for the consumer.

People expect value for money and services that are delivered in ways which better suit their needs. They also expect proper redress if something goes wrong as a result of poor service. The legal professions are no exception. Whether we are buying a house or getting advice about our rights, the way in which lawyers, legal executives and those who advise on legal issues work, how they are regulated and what the processes are for complaining about their work potentially affects us all.

The Government broadly accept the main recommendations of Sir David's important report and the arguments for change which he sets out. We want to ensure proportionate and appropriate regulation and separate handling of consumer redress. We will want to work closely on the details of his report with all of those involved, especially those representing the legal professions and consumer interests, to take forward this report and deliver reform quickly. We will be careful to ensure as small a bureaucracy as possible.

We strongly support the objectives set out in Sir David's report: maintaining the rule of law, providing access to justice, ensuring protection for consumers, promoting competition, encouraging a strong and effective legal profession and increasing public understanding. To achieve those objectives, Sir David's principal recommendations are the creation of a new oversight regulator with significant powers, the separation of the representative and regulatory functions of the professional bodies, the creation of a single new complaints body and steps to enable the creation of legal disciplinary practices (LDPs). These changes could see non-lawyers for the first time not only as managers of legal practices, but also as owners of and investors in LDPs.

I am sure that the legal professional bodies will engage positively with us. The Government's overriding aim is to preserve the best of the current system while moving forward for the benefit of consumers. While there are challenges in the report, we have worked together successfully on a number of issues, including the establishment of a new interim system for the appointment of Queen's Counsel. I am confident that we will continue to do so on the issues arising from Sir David's report.

The Government will publish a White Paper on Sir David's proposals as soon as possible next year, to be followed by legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Today, in response to Sir David's report we can affirm our commitment to putting in place a regulatory framework that ensures a better deal for consumers through increased competition, innovation and transparency, and safeguards the independence of the legal professions—including independence from Government—in providing high quality advice. Sir David's report provides a clear basis for achieving these aims and the Government are committed to taking this forward as a matter of paramount importance.

British-Irish Council Summit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister led the UK delegation to the sixth summit of the British-Irish Council and was accompanied by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, Lord Falconer; the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

The Council noted the ongoing engagement between the British and Irish Governments and the parties in Northern Ireland and looked forward to the restoration of the devolved institutions, established under the Good Friday agreement, as soon as possible.

The main issue for discussion was Tourism, and the Council has agreed a programme to take forward joint working in this area. I have placed a copy of the communiqué in the Commons Library.

DEFENCE

Deaths at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut (Independent Review)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): The deaths of four soldiers at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut between 1995 and 2002 have been the subject of detailed scrutiny and much public comment for some time. Recent press reporting has further raised public interest in these distressing events.

I told the House on 30 November 2004 that I was satisfied that the Ministry of Defence's response to public concern over the four deaths at Princess Royal Barracks was adequate and comprehensive but that I nevertheless accepted the case for a further review by a fully independent figure. I am now in a position to set out the details of that review.

The review will be conducted by Nicholas Blake QC and will begin shortly. I expect Mr Blake to complete his report in the first half of next year. Mr. Blake is a distinguished human rights lawyer with

wide experience of civil liberties and criminal justice. His report will be published in full, along with my response to it.

The terms of reference for the review are as follows:

> "Urgently to review the circumstances surrounding the deaths of four soldiers at PrincessRoyalBarracks, Deepcut between 1995 and 2002 in light of available material and anyrepresentationsthat might be made in this regard, and to produce a report."

In commissioning this review I am well aware that its scope and nature may not satisfy all those, members of this House included, who have been calling for a formal public inquiry into some or all non-combat deaths in the armed forces or for a public inquiry into the deaths at Deepcut. These are very different demands. By concentrating on the circumstances of the four deaths at the army base at Deepcut this review will focus on the issue at the heart of current public concern. The review will have the full co-operation of the Ministry of Defence and, I am pleased to say, Surrey police. A review can analyse issues much more quickly than a public inquiry and would not interfere with other current investigations or proceedings. My expectation is that the rigour and independence of the review will produce value to all parties concerned. It is the right way to proceed and I would urge all those who may be sceptical of what the review can achieve to suspend their criticism and to lend it their full support.

It is of the highest importance that a balanced and authoritative account of the circumstances surrounding the deaths should be put into the public domain, to sustain public confidence in military training. The consistently outstanding performance of the young men and women of the armed forces, often only recently out of initial training, is testament to the quality of that training system.

Typhoon Tranche 2 Contract

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): I am delighted to announce that the contracts for the second Tranche of Typhoon multi-role combat aircraft have now been signed by the general manager of the NATO Eurofighter and Tornado management agency, on behalf of the four partner nations, and by the chief executives of the project's co-ordinating industrial consortia, Eurofighter GmbH and Eurojet Turbo GmbH. This is excellent news for both the Royal Air Force and for United Kingdom industry and represents the achievement of another major milestone for the Typhoon project.

This order builds upon the success of the introduction into service of Tranche 1 Typhoon aircraft, which are demonstrating outstanding performance in operation with the RAF. The Tranche 2 contracts will provide the RAF with an additional 89 aircraft at a value in cash terms of around £4.3 billion. The contracts form part of what is thought to be the largest defence order ever placed in Europe, reflecting the successful and continuing co-operation between the four partner nations and European industry.

Typhoon will be an outstandingly capable, state-of-the-art aircraft which will form a cornerstone of the RAF's future capability. The aircraft will have the flexibility to contribute across a wide range of operations delivering air superiority and precision ground attack capabilities.

The order will provide major benefits across the United Kingdom and, at the peak of manufacture, industry expect it to create or sustain some 16,000 jobs with defence manufacturers, many in areas of high-technology, and a significant number in supporting industries across the economy more widely.

Typhoon will be a world-beating aircraft and this major investment will provide the RAF with the capability to respond to the challenges and threats we face now and in the future.

Project Aquatrine Package C

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Defence has awarded a contract for project Aquatrine, package C, to Coast to Coast Water Ltd. (C2C), a consortium comprising Severn Trent Water plc and Costain. This contract covers the operation and maintenance of the Department's water and wastewater assets and infrastructure in the north and east of England.

The contract forms one of three such packages of project Aquatrine, a 25-year arrangement worth £2.3 billion across three packages that cover the MOD's estate in Great Britain. The project is one of the Government's most significant public-private partnership (PPP) projects, and will enable the transfer of environmental risk to those in the private sector who are best placed to manage it. This will enable the MOD to focus on its core activities.

Following a pre-commencement period, Coast to Coast Water Ltd. will commence services in March 2005.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Three-Year Revenue and Capital Settlements

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): The Government introduced three-year settlements for central Government Departments in the comprehensive spending review in 1998. For the full benefits of three-year plans to feed through into improved public service delivery, it is important that they are cascaded from Departments to executive agencies and other budget holders.

We are today issuing a consultation document seeking views on the Government's proposals for the implementation of three-year revenue and capital settlements for local government in England. It fulfils a commitment in the Government's 2004 spending review to consult on these proposals with local government and other stakeholders with a view to agreeing local authority finance settlements for 2006–07 and 2007–08 during 2005.

It is proposed that authorities will be given three-year allocations of grant, which will be reviewed every two years in line with the Government's own spending reviews. This will apply to grant distributed through the general formula as well as to specific grants and capital grants, unless there are overriding reasons why this is not desirable or possible

The distribution of grant will therefore need to be fixed three years in advance. This can be done either by using the same formulae and data for each of the three years or by making forward projections of at least some of the data. The paper consults on the Government's proposals for doing this.

In order to maintain the stability of the new system, it is proposed that functional changes should be planned around the spending review cycle, so that resource reallocations do not disrupt the planning certainty that authorities have been given.

Three-year revenue and capital allocations provide certainty of income, but the real world does not remain static. Account also needs to be taken of major changes such as council tax revaluation that are foreseen, but which do not necessarily fit a three-year cycle.

Since authorities will have a sound basis on which to plan their budgets, they should also be able to give council tax payers and central government greater certainty about future budgets and the impact on council tax levels. The paper explores ways of achieving this.

Copies of the consultation paper are available in both Libraries of the House and are available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website www.odpm.gov.uk. The consultation period ends on 11 March 2005.

Planning Delivery Grant 2005–06

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): Today I am launching a consultation on the allocation criteria for £170 million of planning delivery grant (PDG) in 2005–06. The consultation paper will enable local authorities to calculate a high proportion of their grant entitlement, subject to any changes which may result from the outcome of the consultation. I am also launching a further consultation on increases to planning fees.

Planning delivery grant is aimed at providing additional resources to local planning authorities to support fundamental changes we want to see in the system to help deliver sustainable communities. The main principle underlying design of the grant is to reward performance in a range of planning activities.

For 2005–06, the total amount of grant available will be £170 million. Later in this statement I will outline how proposed further planning fee increases will bring additional resource to authorities for planning.

For 2005–06 and for the two subsequent SR04 years, we propose to allocate PDG on the basis of a 75/25 per cent. split between resource and capital, in line with the expectation that LPAs should use PDG to continue to invest in systems that will improve the efficiency and delivery of their planning services. The split is based on the level of PDG that was identified by research into the 2003–04 grant as spent on IT and capital improvements.

The consultation document, which shall go to all planning authorities in England, sets out proposals for rewarding planning performance improvement in the following areas: development control, development plans, enterprise areas, delivery of housing in areas of high and low demand, and provision of a quality service through e-planning.

Authorities and stakeholders are invited to comment on the criteria for awarding the grant, which, as in 2004–05, have been devised to reward good performance and to incentivise further improvements. The package also includes measures to assist regional planning bodies, the planning inspectorate, and the Greater London Authority in their support for local authorities in bringing about planning reform. A small element of the grant has been top-sliced to support national initiatives such as the planning advisory service, and the scheme of postgraduate planning bursaries.

I will carry forward mechanisms for withholding grant where there are concerns about the reliability of data, and also to sharpen the abatement of grant where the rate of appeals upheld against the authority's decision to refuse far exceeds the national average, to make sure that the grant rewards quality decision-making on applications as well as timeliness. Once again, there will be no minimum allocation.

I am very aware that authorities need as much information as possible at this time of year to help them with their budget setting arrangements. For that reason, I am taking the step of including in the consultation actual intended allocation amounts where the statistics to make these are centrally available, and where they are not, I will give sufficient information to authorities to enable them either to work out the remainder of the allocation, or to provide them with an indicative range or a minimum amount. Using this information, authorities should be able to reach good estimates of their possible allocations for next year.

The consultation will end on 27 January 2005. Allocations of grant will be made in February 2005.

Today I am also launching a further consultation on increases to planning fees. The initial consultation, which ended on 9 December, proposed fee increases totalling £30 million for next year, but the measures on which I now wish to consult would raise fees to provide £68 million in total. So the total average increase in fees would be 39 per cent. not 17 per cent. as previously consulted on. This would give authorities an important opportunity to help meet the costs of delivering their planning services.

It has become clear from the consultation already in progress that many respondents do not think the proposed increases are sufficient to enable them to carry out their planning functions. Developers have indicated that they would be prepared to see fee increases where they could be ensured of a quality service. I want to be able to give authorities the proper resources to provide

the services the community needs. Once again, the proposed increases will be spread proportionately—the fees for householder applications will rise from £110 to £135, while the maximum fee for a major development will rise from £11,000 to £50,000.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Diplomatic Representation

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): In December 2003, in the White Paper: "UK International Priorities: a Strategy for the FCO" (Cm 6052), I set out the Government's international priorities for the next 5–10 years and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's strategy for delivering them in a world of new challenges, opportunities and threats.

On the basis of that strategy and the outcome of the 2004 spending round, we have been completing a reorganisation of the FCO in London and considering changes to our overseas network in order to align our resources more effectively to our priorities.

This statement concerns changes to the overseas network, aimed at enhancing our effectiveness in representing British interests abroad, and helping to deliver an efficient service on behalf of the British taxpayer.

Context

The FCO's overseas network currently comprises:

153 sovereign posts (embassies and high commissions) staffed by UK-based diplomats and local staff;

70 subordinate posts (consulates general and consulates) reporting to an embassy or high commission;

10 missions to international organisations and conferences such as the UN, the EU and NATO; and

resident governors in nine of the 14 overseas territories.

Since 1997 we have made a series of changes in the overseas network to respond to changing priorities. UK-based staff numbers have grown by 9 per cent. from about 5,600 in 1997 to about 6,100 now. We have opened 18 new sovereign and subordinate posts with UK-based staff since 1997, along with 13 locally staffed posts. Some 10 posts have been closed over the same period (excluding the announcements in this statement). By comparison France, with a network of almost identical size to our own, has since 2000 opened nine new posts and closed three. Germany today has 11 fewer posts than in 1997.

In the past three years the UK has opened major new missions in Baghdad, Basra, Kabul and Pyongyang (North Korea) in response to changing needs.

This statement sets out some further changes to our overseas network. As with changes in the past, they reflect changing demands and challenges, and the need better to align our resources with our priorities, to maximise efficiency, and to ensure that the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation.

Sovereign Posts

We intend to close eight sovereign Posts with UK-based staff, and one locally staffed post (Tarawa, Kiribati). Details are set out in the following table:

Post	*Planned change*
Asia Pacific	
Port Vila (Vanuatu)	Close. Appoint Honorary Consul. Cover from Suva (Fiji)
Nuku'alofa (Tonga)	Close. Cover from Suva (Fiji)
Dili (East Timor)	Close. Appoint Honorary Consul. Cover from Jakarta. (Indonesia)
Tarawa (Kiribati) (currently a locally staffed post)	Close. Cover from Suva (Fiji)
Americas	
Asuncion (Paraguay)	Close. Appoint Honorary Consul. Cover from Buenos Aires (Argentina)
Nassau (Bahamas)	Close. Appoint Honorary Consul with additional local staff support for consular work. Cover from Kingston (Jamaica)
Africa	
Maseru (Lesotho)	Close. Appoint Honorary Consul. Cover from Pretoria (South Africa)
Mbabane (Swaziland)	Close. Appoint Honorary Consul. Cover from Pretoria (South Africa).
Antananarivo (Madagascar)	Close. Appoint Honorary Consul. cover from Port Louis (Mauritius)

All these cover arrangements are subject to confirmation and agreement with the host governments concerned.

Separately, in Europe, there is no question of closing down our embassy to the Holy See. However, we have concluded that we will be able to maintain our interests if we widen the pool of potential candidates as ambassador to beyond the FCO when we look for a successor to the present incumbent next summer.

Subordinate Posts

We also plan to streamline UK representation in subordinate posts (primarily in OECD countries) in line with UK Trade and Investment's (UKTI) new approach to trade promotion in developed countries (see below), while expanding our honorary consul network worldwide. Experience for example in our posts in Italy has shown that fully localised posts are able to deliver services in a cost-efficient, professional and effective way under the strategic direction of the superintending embassy; and our plans extend that model elsewhere. We expect political work to be carried out mainly in capitals, except in large, federal countries like the USA.

We propose moving to locally engaged staff only in eleven posts. And we plan to close ten subordinate posts altogether. Changes are set out in the following table, together with details of how the network in each country will look after these changes have been made.

Country	Planned change	Network after change
Australia		
Brisbane	Localise. Cover from Sydney.	UK based: Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne.
Perth	Localise. Cover from Sydney.	Local: Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide.
New Zealand		
Auckland	Localise. Cover consular cases from Wellington, and UKTI work from Sydney	UK Based: Wellington. Local: Auckland.
Japan		
Fukuoka	Close. Cover from Osaka.	UK based: Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya.
Laos		
Vientiane (Laos) (Trade Office)	Close. Cover from Bangkok.	No post in Laos: covered from Bangkok.
United States		
Seattle	Localise. Cover from San Francisco.	UK Based: Washington, Atlanta, , Boston, Chicago, Houston, Denver, Los Angeles, BCG New York, San Francisco. Local: Miami, Seattle, Orlando
Miami	Localise. Cover from Atlanta.	
Phoenix	Close. Cover from Los Angeles.	
Dallas	Close. Cover from Houston.	
San Juan (Puerto Rico)	Close. Cover from Atlanta.	
France		
Bordeaux	Localise. Cover from Paris.	UK Based: Paris, Lille. Local: Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseilles.
Lyon	Localise. Cover from Paris.	
Germany		
Munich	Localise. Cover from Dusseldorf.	UK Based: Berlin, Dusseldorf. Local: Hamburg, Munich.
Hamburg	Localise. Cover from Dusseldorf.	
Frankfurt	Close. Cover from Dusseldorf.	
Leipzig	Close. Cover from Berlin.	
Stuttgart	Close. Cover from Dusseldorf.	
Spain		
Palma	Localise. Cover from Madrid.	UK Based: Madrid, Barcelona Local: Alicante, Malaga, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Bilbao, Palma, Ibiza, Las Palmas.
Bilbao	Localise. Cover from Madrid.	
Portugal		
Oporto	Close. Cover from Lisbon.	UK Based: Lisbon.
Cameroon		
Douala	Close. Cover from Yaounde.	UK Based: Yaounde.

In Aden, we will retain the services of our local consul, but move from the existing consulate to smaller premises with a view to establishing an honorary consulate.

UK Trade and Investment

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has worked closely with UKTI in formulating these proposals. UKTI is focusing its overseas resources where its commercial teams can make the most impact. This includes strengthening our work to attract inward investment to the UK, and reinforcing support for British businesses in important emerging markets, like China, where government support makes a real difference to business, and where very strong economic growth means enormous opportunities. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recent announcement of the establishment of an Asia task force will build on this strategy.

To provide the resources for these new activities, UKTI has decided to take a number of steps better to match resources to demand. Commercial services in a number of smaller markets are being re-organised. In the UK's smallest overseas markets, UKTI services themselves in FCO posts covering these markets will be withdrawn, although support and advice from UKTI's website and from its teams in London will still be available. And, importantly, political support and lobbying by ambassadors and high commissioners in support of British business in these markets will continue to be available everywhere.

Timing and Savings

We plan to have implemented all these changes before the end of 2006. The main savings from the package will be in staff and running costs, including rentals. There will be some one-off costs, including for redundancy. But once these have been met, overall savings should amount to around £6 million per annum as a contribution to the FCO's overall efficiency target of £86 million. (A further £0.5 million of savings are part of our efficiency plan for the 2002 spending review). There will be some revenue from asset sales, although these will take time to realise.

The savings made will help to underpin higher-priority work in line with the FCO's strategic priorities, including on counter proliferation, counter terrorism, energy and climate change. Some of the savings will also be redeployed to strategic priority work within certain regions where we are closing posts. In Africa, for instance, we plan to create new jobs to cover these issues across the region, with a new post in Nairobi to help support our work on climate change, one in Nigeria to cover energy, and one in Pretoria to cover regional issues more generally as well as covering Maseru and Mbabane.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Caroline Flint): This statement should be read in conjunction with one which I made on 17 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 137WS announcing changes in the way in which the Home Office handles certain types of project licence applications made under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

The changes concerned licence applications referred for advice to the Animal Procedures Committee (APC). The statement was to the effect that some of the applications already referred would continue to go to the APC, others would not.

At that time I said that further consideration was to be given to the question of which additional categories of applications might be referred. That consideration has now been completed, leading to more recommendations by the APC for them to see applications likely to raise particular public or societal concerns. I have accepted these recommendations.

In summary the following are the types of project licence applications which are either currently referred to the APC, as explained in my previous statement, or which will be additionally referred from 1 January 2005 (asterisked):

- any involving the proposed use of wild-caught, non-human primates;
- any involving the proposed use of cats, dogs, equidae or non-human primates in protocols of substantial severity* (applications to use non-human primates in this category are already referred);
- any for projects with a substantial severity banding, or major animal welfare or ethical implications, involving (a) xenotransplantation of whole organs, (b) chronic pain models, (c) study of the central nervous system;*
- applications of any kind raising novel or contentious issues, or giving rise to serious societal concerns.

Both the APC and the Home Office are concerned that the new referral arrangements do not unduly delay processing of the applications concerned. Steps have been taken to that end, and the arrangements will be kept under review.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 16 December 2004

CABINET OFFICE

Public Bodies

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. David Miliband): I have today published "Delivering Diversity in Public Appointments 2004", which explains what each central Government Department is doing to increase diversity on the boards of their public bodies.

The report contains action plans for each department as well as details of progress to date. It also includes targets to increase the proportion of appointments held by women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people to be achieved by 2007.

The Government are keen to ensure that its commitments to public appointments are met. The first is that selection should be made on merit, using fair and open procedures that ensure the best available candidate is appointed to each post.

The second is a commitment to improving diversity in public appointments. There is real value in boards broadly reflecting the community they serve and I firmly believe that more diverse boards lead to more effective decision making.

Overall progress has been made in the representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people, however the overall figures for women have dropped slightly, thus emphasising the need to continue to promote our diversity objectives and continue our outreach work.

The report can be found on the Internet at www.publicappointments.gov.uk. Copies of the report have also been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Ministerial and Royal Air Travel

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. David Miliband): I am today announcing a review of the current arrangements for the provision of air travel for the Royal Family, Government Ministers and accompanying senior officials, taking into account safety, reliability, security and value for money, and to make recommendations for improvement. The review will be headed by sir Peter Gershon and is expected to report in the second half of 2005.

TREASURY

Home Finance Schemes

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Stephen Timms): The Treasury has today published the Government's response to the consultation on the definition of home reversion type arrangements for inclusion in the scope of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, which closed on 28 September 2004. Copies are available in the vote Office and the Library of the House, and are accessible on the Treasury website at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Family Proceedings Cases

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses a consultation paper on the disclosure of information in family proceedings cases involving children. The text is also available on the Department's website at: http://www.dca.gov.uk/consult/confr.htm

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Export of Works of Art Committee

The Minister for the Arts (Estelle Morris): The fiftieth report of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art for 2003–04 will be published later today. The reviewing committee provides independent advice to the Secretary of State on whether cultural objects that are the subject of applications for export licences are of outstanding national importance. During the period covered by the report, following recommendations from the reviewing committee, temporary bars were placed on the export of nine items, including paintings, drawings, furniture, silverware and archives. Of these, seven items, valued at £6.8 million, were purchased and remain in the UK. The report contains the reviewing committee's comments on policy matters relating to the operation of the export control and the protection of cultural objects, and details of each case considered during the period 1 July 2003 to 30 April 2004.

Copies of the report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The review will also be available on the DCMS website http://www.culture.gov.uk

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning Inspectorate

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill: The Government set out its programme for the reform of the planning system in England in "Sustainable Communities—Delivering Through Planning" (July 2002). The principal aims of the reform are to produce a faster, fairer system that allows for greater public involvement. The legislative changes required, including those for the reform of the development plan system, were enacted in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

This is against a background of a continued rise in planning applications submitted to local authorities as a result of economic growth. As the number of planning applications has increased, so has the number of planning appeals submitted to the Planning Inspectorate—indeed the percentage rise in the number of appeals received is greater than the corresponding percentage increase in applications (because refusal rates are also rising). The number of appeals received by the Planning Inspectorate has increased by over 50 per cent. in the past three years.

This increase coupled with the doubling of the number of Inspectors required to carry out inquiries into local plans this year has resulted in a deterioration in the Planning Inspectorate's overall performance in the amount of time take to determine planning appeals.

To restore performance, I have made available an extra £1 million this year to fund taking on additional Inspectors and providing them with the support they need. I am looking carefully at resource needs next year and will provide extra resources if necessary. The Inspectorate has formed a taskforce dedicated to clearing the backlog of appeals and is looking to see significant progress by next spring.

I want sustained improvement. The Inspectorate is committed to boosting productivity and delivering a more effective service to its customers. In order to achieve this, the Inspectorate has set up an independently chaired Productivity Board. The Inspectorate is also restructuring itself to give greater focus to operational delivery and improved services to its customers. The restructuring of the Inspectorate is expected to be completed in March 2005.

I also intend to extend the period for submitting planning appeals from three to six months, which will have the effect of reversing the change which was introduced in September last year. When these changes were introduced, it was anticipated that the reduction in the appeal period would give greater certainty to all parties as to whether or not an appeal was to be lodged. However, there has been widespread criticism that the period of three months is insufficient for negotiations between the prospective appellant and the LPA. There is a strong perception that the reduction in the appeal period has led to applicants submitting appeals without first making any attempt to negotiate an amended application with the LPA and that this may have contributed to the rise in appeal numbers. There is a strong lobby from the planning community and from developers alike that the period in which to appeal should be restored to 6 months in order to allow longer to negotiate following a refusal. I am persuaded by these arguments. The change will require an amendment to the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 to reverse the effect of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2003 (SI 2003 no. 2047). I propose to lay the necessary Order before the Christmas recess. It will come into effect from mid January.

This will restore the opportunity for local planning authorities and appellants to enter into post decision negotiations and thus avoid unnecessary appeals.

Given the current pressures on the Planning Inspectorate, I intend to delay the introduction of dual jurisdiction. The powers for this are contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and will apply where an applicant appeals to the Secretary of State on the grounds that the LPA has not determined a planning application within the prescribed eight-week period. Under dual jurisdiction the LPA will have an additional period of time to issue its decision, even though an appeal has been lodged. While it is anticipated that this initiative will eventually lead to a reduction in the appeal workload, the time is not right to make this change with the present backlog of appeals.

I am also taking the opportunity to extend the statutory period for local authorities to determine major applications from eight to thirteen weeks. The present arrangements allow for parties to appeal after eight weeks where the LPA has not issued a decision. This conflicts with the period of thirteen weeks which is given under best value targets to determine major applications. This change will bring greater clarity to the appeal system and give LPA's significantly longer to determine major applications. This should also help to reduce the number of appeals against major applications.

This package of measures will assist in tackling the backlog of appeals in the Planning Inspectorate and demonstrates the Government's commitment to providing a speedier, more responsive planning system which will support the right development in the right place and contribute to sustainable communities.

Renewable Energy

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has today published a companion guide to PPS22 on renewable energy. The companion guide offers good practice advice on a range of issues, including how to frame policies for renewable energy in development plans.

Planning policy statement 22, published in August 2004, was an important step towards facilitating the delivery of more renewable energy developments and thereby meeting this Government's commitments in respect of global warming and climate changes. It sets out the Government's national planning policies for all types of renewable energy development. The companion guide offers practical advice as to how these polices can be implemented on the ground. It is intended to assist planners, regional and local decision-makers and other stakeholders in understanding the often complex issues associated with the different technologies and their application in different environments and is relevant to all local planning authorities in England.

The guide addresses the actions required at the local and regional level, with regard to both strategic forward planning and development control and includes a chapter of each of these planning policy issues. It also sets out the factors that make a 'good' renewable energy application, how best to assess cumulative landscape and visual effect and how to deal with community involvement. Case studies are used to illustrate key points and to demonstrate how specific issues can be addressed. A technical annex to the guide includes specific advice on the range of renewable energy technologies covered by PPS22.

Copies of the companion guide will be made available in the Libraries of both Houses and it will also be available on the web site of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

DEFENCE

Race Equality Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): In accordance with undertakings in its race equality scheme, the Ministry of Defence has produced a second progress report, a copy

of which is being placed today in the Library of the House. The report builds on and relates back to the first report, issued in January 2004, and describes the progress made across the Department and by the armed forces. It emphasises our determination to maintain the standards we have achieved to date and to continue to review our policies and procedures.

Our record for managing and retaining ethnic minority personnel is good. The outcome of staff attitude surveys and the low level of race-related complaints indicate a continuing improvement in the race equality climate.

However, there is still much more work to do as the report acknowledges. The Ministry of Defence is committed to meeting the aspirations set out in the race equality scheme.

FOREIGN AND COMMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

G8 Global Partnership

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): Members will wish to be aware of the publication on 16 December of the second annual report by the Government of the United Kingdom's contribution to the against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction. The second report details the progress made in the past 12 months in destroying and securing the former Soviet Union's legacies of WMD and associated materials and infrastructure.

The UK pledged $750 million to the global partnership at the Kananaskis G8 summit in 2002. Since then the FCO, DTI, and MoD in close co-operation with the Russian Federation, other countries of the Former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe and other funding partners, have developed a wide portfolio of programmes and made considerable progress on implementing projects on the ground which help to tackle these issues. In 2005 the UK in its capacity as G8 president intends to take forward the work of the global partnership under the theme of "Pledges to Progress", focussing on effective project implementation.

The international community faces immense challenges in tackling the legacy of cold war weapons of mass destruction left in the former Soviet Union. The cold war WMD programmes in the FSU have created a significant non-proliferation and environmental threat to us all. This work represents the UK's largest non-proliferation programme and, as the report indicates, we have made significant progress over the last 12 months in collaboration both with other donors nations and our partners in the FSU.

Copies of the report are available in the Library of the House. Further reports will be published annually setting out the progress achieved in the work being undertaken by the United Kingdom.

Public Diplomacy Review

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): As part of spending review 2004, I agreed with my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to undertake a review of the effectiveness of our public diplomacy work. Lord Carter of Coles has agreed to lead this review. He will be supported by a small team based within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and an advisory panel of experts. The review is due to start immediately and Lord Carter of Coles will report his findings by summer 2005. The terms of reference are as follows:

> To examine the effectiveness of current Public Diplomacy activities in delivering outcomeswhich contribute to the achievement of HMG objectives.
>
> To take stock of progress in implementing the Wilton Review (2002) through the work of thePD Strategy Board.
>
> To consider the scope for improving PD activities, both in London and overseas, tomaximise their effectiveness and value for money.
>
> And to that end to consider the scope for increased joint PD activity and enhanced co-ordination taking account of experience with the PD Campaigns Fund and the PD ChallengeFund.
>
> To make recommendations as appropriate.

The review team will undertake a short consultation exercise. If hon. Members would like to feed in comments they should send them to Public Diplomacy Review team, Room WHS52, FCO, King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AH.

HEALTH

NHS Professionals (Accounts 2003–04)

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): The annual accounts and accompanying comptroller and auditor general report of NHS Professionals for 2003–04 has today been laid before the House of Commons pursuant to section 98(1C) of the National Health Service Act 1977. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): The annual report and accounts for Monitor (whose statutory name is Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts), HC 104, were laid before Parliament today. Copies are available in the Library.

Obesity

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): The Government's response to the Health Committee's report of Session 2003–04 on obesity, Cm 6438, has been published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

International Exercise

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Further to the commitment my predecessor, the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett), gave to the House in July 2003 that we would be taking part in a major UK US exercise in 2005 as part of the Home Office's national exercise programme, and as a result of close co-operation with the US on joint crisis management issues, I would now like to provide the House with an update on developments.

Exercise 'Atlantic Blue' is due to take place in April 2005 and is designed to test simultaneous responses to internationally linked terrorist incidents, focusing on how we communicate across international borders at a strategic level.

The Metropolitan Police Service is the host force for the UK working closely with the Home Office and other Government Departments and London agencies on planning and delivery. For obvious reasons we will not be discussing the scenario before the exercise takes place.

Exercise play in the US will be live while in the UK it will be a notional command post exercise (CPX) only. We have agreed this is the best way for us to focus entirely on strategic-level communication issues, rather than on the management of live play at an operational level, which is regularly rehearsed around the UK.

The UK programme of exercises is among the best in the world and a vital part of our work in resilience and contingency planning. This exercise provides us with an invaluable opportunity to enhance our domestic exercise programme by working with our US counterparts in order to test our capability to respond to the specific challenges of an international terrorist incident.

The exercise has been planned as a result of discussions between my predecessor and Cabinet colleagues, and the Department for Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and his colleagues, to promote a co-ordinated approach to counter-terrorism and homeland security issues.

In order to develop the work of Atlantic Blue we are keen to pursue our involvement in future exercises with the US, both in terms of tabletop and live exercises which enable us to further develop our preparedness and resilience.

I would like to reiterate that we are holding this exercise as part of sensible contingency planning with the aim of developing our joint preparedness and resilience in the event of a terrorist incident. It in no way reflects a change in the level of threat to the UK.

Prisoners (Alcohol Strategy)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I am today announcing the launch of the prisons' alcohol strategy for prisoners.

In line with the national alcohol harm reduction strategy for England published in March, this year, The Prison Service has developed a comprehensive alcohol strategy for prisoners based on extensive consultation with key stakeholders and a range of experts including Alcohol Concern.

The strategy complements both the existing prisons drug strategy and the wider programme of resettlement activity. It will provide a framework for addressing prisoners' alcohol problems. The strategy balances treatment and support with supply reduction measures and provides prisons with a benchmark to formulate their own response to alcohol misuse at a local level. The focus is to improve consistency and build on good practice in the delivery of treatment from within existing resources and in establishing a robust framework to test prisoners for alcohol.

The strategy will be supported by a treatment good practice guide, which will include a model treatment framework, developed in line with the National Treatment Agency's models of care.

Alcohol is a problem for a significant number of those entering prison. Prisons already have in place a range of initiatives to target those with an alcohol problem. The management of the symptoms of withdrawal from alcohol forms an important element of the revised standard for clinical services for substance misusers. Detoxification is available on reception in all local and remand prisons. Some prisons run alcohol awareness courses and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) run groups in around 50 per cent. of prisons. Additionally, general offending behaviour programmes address the underlying criminogenic factors which occur in alcohol-related crime. For those prisoners whose alcohol misuse is part of poly-drug use, counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare services are available — a low level intervention that creates a care plan based on the specific needs of individual prisoners and offers support through group work and one-to-one counselling. The alcohol strategy will enable prisons to build on their good work.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Youth Justice

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I am pleased to announce that I am today laying before Parliament the Government's response to the Audit Commission report, "Youth justice 2004: a review of the reformed youth justice system".

Reform of the youth justice system has been a key priority for the Government. The Audit Commission's report takes stock of the difference our reforms have made. We warmly welcome their conclusion that the new system is a considerable improvement on the old one.

The Audit Commission also identified some key areas for improvement. The Government response outlines what we are doing to:

- focus courts on more serious and persistent offenders;
- improve what happens in court;
- make sentencing more cost-effective;
- meet the wider needs of offenders; and prevent children offending in the first place.

At the same time as the Audit Commission report, the National Audit Office published its own report into youth justice, "Youth offending: the delivery of community and custodial sentences". This area was subsequently examined by the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts and the Government's response to the Committee's report is also being published today by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

House of Lords Judgment on A & Others and The Secretary of State for the Home Department

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): The House of Lords has today handed down the judgment in this difficult and complex

case. A committee of nine Law Lords has spent the last 11 weeks considering the issues and, within the short time available since the judgment was handed down, it is not possible to give a detailed response to all the points raised by the judgment. However, given its importance I believe it necessary to make this statement to the House as soon as possible.

This appeal is about the compatibility of our domestic law with the ECHR. The Law Lords have upheld the appeal by those detained under the Anti Terrorism Crime and Security Act and we need to study the judgment carefully, not least because the Court of Appeal had unanimously endorsed our view that these provisions were compatible with our obligations under the ECHR. It is ultimately for Parliament to decide whether and how we should amend the law. The Part 4 provisions will remain in force until Parliament agrees the future of the law. Accordingly I will not be revoking the certificates or releasing the detainees, whom I have reason to believe are a significant threat to our security, a judgment upheld by the Special Immigration Appeals Commission, chaired by a High Court judge.

My primary role as Home Secretary is to protect national security and to ensure the safety and security of this country. In doing so, I need to consider how we balance the rights of individuals against those of society: how we ensure safety and security within a democracy without undermining the values that are at the very heart of it.

Derogation is not something that any Government enters into lightly and the powers have been used sparingly as promised Parliament during the passage of the Act. To date 16 individuals have been certified and detained under the part 4 powers and another individual has been certified but is currently detained under other powers. Of these 12 remain in detention. Two have chosen to leave the country as those detained under the part 4 powers are free to do at anytime. Those certified have a right of appeal to the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC) which is a superior court of record, chaired by a High Court Judge.

Those who have been certified and detained under the Part 4 powers are detained because they have been certified as a threat to our security. This considered assessment is supported by the Security Service and has been tested through a superior court of record with full access to all the relevant security and intelligence information.

The need for the Part 4 powers and the derogation are kept under frequent review. In addition to regular threat assessments the Home Secretary regularly meets the Director General of the Security Service, and it is their advice that informs the Home Secretary's decision on the continuing public emergency threatening the life of the nation.

I will be asking Parliament to renew this legislation in the new year but in the meantime we will be studying the judgment carefully to see whether it is possible to modify our legislation to address the concerns raised by the House of Lords.

Metropolitan Police Fund Account

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I have today laid copies of the Metropolitan Police Fund Account for 2000–01 in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRANSPORT

Manchester Metrolink

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): In July this year I told Parliament that because of excessive cost increases I would have to withdraw funding for the phase III extensions to Manchester Metrolink.

Looking at the proposals, it has become increasingly clear there are real and persistent problems with the costs of the extensions. The public sector funding requirement has almost tripled since we first approved the project. Nevertheless, I have decided to commit over half a billion pounds, the sum previously agreed to fund phase III, to Manchester's transport network. Manchester will also be able to bid for additional funds from the new transport innovation fund. It is now up to the transport authority to come forward with proposals for how this funding is used.

Looking at the history of the Metrolink proposals shows the problems it has had with huge increases in public funding requirements:

> In July 2000 public sector funding was approved with an up front budget of £282 million, for three lines: to Oldham and Rochdale, Ashton and the airport; plus some upgrading of the existing system.
>
> In December 2002, this budget had to be increased to £520 million (including £60 million local contribution). We made clear that there would be no more money from the Department. The Manchester authorities accepted they would meet the costs of any further increases.
>
> In December 2003, GMPTE returned to ask us for still more money, but for a reduced project. The three new lines were reduced to two and a half, with the line to the airport replaced with a shorter spur to East Didsbury.

The public sector funding requirement was going up and up—partly because of private sector, pessimism about light rail, and partly because of failings in the original cost estimates. There was no guarantee that costs would not continue to rise. This led to my decision last July to withdraw funding for this project, and to ask GMPTE to work with us to look at alternatives that would benefit Manchester, but at a better price.

Following this decision, a working group was set up with GMPTE and chaired by Tony McNulty. Its purpose was to see whether light rail could be made affordable in Manchester and to consider alternatives. I also appointed my own financial and technical consultants.

The potential cost to taxpayers of the proposed extensions is now clearer:

> GMPTE confirm that at least £600 million public sector up front funding would be needed to build just two lines—Oldham-Rochdale and Ashton. Our judgement is that there is a strong chance that costs would be even higher.

GMPTE told Tony McNulty on 7 December that about £900 million of up front funding would be needed for delivery of the original three lines over the next 10 years—a tripling since the original approval. There is no guarantee this would not increase further.

In the light of this, I have considered the options for the way forward. GMPTE want me to agree to their continuing with their current procurement for the three lines. That would mean committing to upfront public sector funding of £900 million, when only four years ago we capped the figure at £282 million. I cannot do that. No Government could ignore these huge increases—a three-fold increase in just four years. And accepting this price would consume too much of the money that will be available for transport including in the north-west in future years. In addition, a scheme for substantially less than three lines would need a new procurement or risk legal challenge. I have therefore told GMPTE that the current procurement should not be revived.

Nor can I agree to GMPTE's alternative of starting a new procurement to enable construction of the three lines to be phased over a longer period. This would not address the fundamental problem of cost escalation.

I am however confirming that the £520 million budget is still available for Manchester, subject to GMPTE developing a satisfactory plan for these areas. This represents a major investment in Manchester, enabling a package of measures to address the transport problems in these parts of the city, which may include light rail improvements.

We have already provided some £170 million of the £520 million. Around £80 million was for GMPTE to buy the concession for the operation of Metrolink. This has continuing value to generate revenue for GMPTE and give them greater control over the tram network. The rest has been for advance works and buying land, some of which may still be required for the package that GMPTE now develop.

GMPTE are able to supplement this budget, both from their own resources and by bidding for funding from government through the transport innovation fund. The TIF is available for authorities which propose innovative and coherent schemes to tackle congestion and encourage modal shift which could act as exemplars for others facing similar challenges. This provides a real opportunity for Manchester to look at its transport policy across the piece and develop a bold integrated package.

The budget I am committing today provides the opportunity for a major transport investment package for these areas of Manchester. It is now up to the Manchester authorities to make the most of this opportunity, and to come forward with proposals that will deliver the transport improvements that these areas need.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Jobseeker's Allowance

The Minister for Work (Jane Kennedy): On 2 December, the Chancellor announced in his pre-Budget report that we will be looking at a number of ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the jobseeker's allowance regime.

Today I am announcing details of pilot measures and the locations selected to undertake pilot activity from January through to July 2005.

These measures are intended to speed up entry into employment by improving our understanding of conditionally, increasing commitment to personal job search activity and enabling more effective review of progression.

Our pilots include:

a revised jobseeker's agreement, which we will test in all pilot districts, for completion by the claimant, focussed upon job search steps and including a record of personal job search activity for ongoing review;

a revised work focused interview, focusing upon an explanation of conditionality and job matching, based upon the self-completed jobseeker's agreement;

a virtual segmentation tool to test whether we can reliably predict the likely speed of individuals gaining employment; and

three innovative approaches to the fortnightly job search review; fortnightly telephone contact with random call-in (random call-in means that individuals can be called into the jobcentre for a face to face review of their job search), random call-in for the first three signing events, and random call-in for the first six signing events.

Pilot activity will be accompanied by a thorough evaluation programme. To test the effectiveness of the new signing regimes we will be applying a random assignment approach which means that about half of all claimants will experience the standard regime.

Pilot areas are:

Telephone Signing with Random Call-in

Highlands, Islands and Clyde Coast (except Clydebank)

The Marches

South East London

Random Call-in for 13 Weeks

Forth Valley and Fife

Birmingham and Solihull

Highlands, Islands and Clyde Coast (just Clydebank)

Random Call-in for First 3 Signing Events

Bucks/Berks/Oxon

Gateshead and South Tyneside

Cornwall and Devon (just Cornwall)

Screening Tool

Cardiff and Vale

London North

East Glasgow

Disability Discrimination Bill

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Maria Eagle): We have published today a consultation document Disability Discrimination Bill: Consultation on private clubs; premises; the definition of disability and the questions procedure (Cm 6402). Copies have been placed in the Library.

This document sets out our detailed proposals for using regulation-making powers in the Disability Discrimination Bill, which had its Second Reading in the House of Lords on 6 December, in respect of the Bill's duties on: private clubs; landlords and managers of rented premises; the extension of the definition of disability; and the extension of the questions procedure.

The proposals do not vary the main duties, but clarify and define the detail of key concepts which will ensure the main duties can be properly met.

The main duties in the Bill would:

i. bring within scope of Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act (which deals with access to goods, services, facilities and premises) private clubs with 25 or more members;

ii. extend the duty of reasonable adjustment, apart from in respect of physical features, to those who let or manage rented premises;

iii. extend the definition of disability to people with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis effectively from the point of diagnosis; and

iv. extend to Part 3 of the DDA a procedure for asking and answering questions about alleged discrimination which is similar to that in Part 2 (which covers employment and occupation) of the Act.

The consultation document, which is also available in a range of accessible formats, seeks views form interested parties by 18 March 2005. The results will be used in the development of draft regulations and, where appropriate, of Disability Rights Commission statutory codes of practice.

We committed to consult on measures concerning private clubs when the draft Disability Discrimination Bill was published in December 2003, and on private clubs and the other measures listed above during pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Bill.

The consultation document will help to ensure there is full and open debate during the Bill's progress on our plans for using regulation-making powers in the Bill. We have already consulted on using the Bill's regulation-making powers in respect of its duties on public bodies in the consultation document "Delivering Equality for Disabled People". Copies of that document are available in the Library.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 20 December 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): A total of 151 countries attended the 13th conference of CITES parties, which was held in Bangkok, Thailand over the period 2–14 October.

The conference agenda covered 65 different topics, including 27 proposed resolutions, 48 draft decisions and 50 different proposals to amend the species listed in the CITES appendices. I attended the conference during its second week where, amongst other things, I spoke against Japan's proposal to downlist the Minke whale to appendix II of CITES. I am pleased say that was eventually soundly defeated and that this magnificent species will continue to be fully protected from commercial trade. I was also pleased to be able to announce that the UK would be providing an additional £110,000 to help fund various projects, including workshops on enforcement, lions and Asian big cats.

Other successful outcomes included increased protection for the Irrawaddy dolphin, great white shark, ramin, humphead wrasse, sulphur-crested cockatoo and the Chinese yew. Our proposed resolutions seeking to address the problems relating to the conservation of great apes and the unsustainable trade in bushmeat were also adopted with some minor amendments, as were the EU proposals for achieving greater synergy with CBD. Details of all the decisions taken at COP13 have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Prior to the conference I was aware of considerable public concern about proposals submitted in relation to trade in lions, ivory and rhino and leopard hunting trophies.

On the lion, the range states were not convinced that the biological data were sufficient to justify a total ban on commercial trade and Kenya was eventually persuaded to withdraw this proposal. However the range states did agree to hold a number of regional workshops to look at the management of Africa's lion populations and I was pleased to be able to announce that the UK would be providing £30,000 to help fund these.

On the question of trade in ivory, Kenya's revised proposal for a six-year moratorium was withdrawn while the EU's compromise alternative, which provided for a suitable "testing period", was rejected. The parties also rejected Namibia's proposal for an annual quota of 2,000 kilos of ivory, although they did agree an amended proposal to allow non-commercial trade in traditional native jewellery made from worked ivory (known as ekipas). The UK would have preferred to defer this latter proposal to the next conference, to allow Namibia and the other range states time to agree a comprehensive arrangement for regulating the trade in ivory. However, there was no consensus within the EU for this approach and the member states therefore had to abstain on this vote.

The parties did agree an action plan for investigating the global trade in ivory, which will focus in particular on the domestic markets in Africa and South East Asia where the demand for ivory is strongest. The parties also endorsed the decisions taken at COP12 with respect to the proposed one-off sales of ivory by Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. This means that these sales can only go ahead once the CITES Standing Committee has confirmed that the strict conditions attached to that agreement have been met. These provide for strict controls over the potential market for this ivory, including the development of a unique monitoring system for any worked ivory that is produced. They also require close monitoring of the illegal killing of elephants using baseline data which are now being gathered on current population and poaching levels. The UK will of course be pressing the Standing Committee to ensure that these conditions are met in full before any sales are allowed.

On the question of black rhino hunting trophies, Namibia and South Africa argued that their populations were increasing and that they should be granted an annual quota of five males (about 0.5 per cent. of the total population). This is needed to enable them to deal with problem animals and to provide an incentive for private landowners to allow these animals on their land as the populations expand beyond the limits that can reasonably be managed within the national park areas. These proposals were eventually agreed by consensus, subject to a requirement that such trophies be individually marked. The parties were also satisfied that the leopard populations in these countries were healthy and causing problems in some farmland areas. It was therefore agreed by consensus to increase the hunting quota for Namibia from 100 to 250 specimens, and that for South Africa from 75 to 150.

Overall this was a very successful conference for the UK, in which most of our strategic goals were achieved. We played a prominent role in the main and side events and had the honour of being elected to chair the difficult discussions in Committee II (one of the two decision-making committees which dealt with most of the business of the conference). We also played a very prominent role in lobbying in support of common EU objectives. Our role in helping to broker deals on the more complex issues was widely recognised by all parties, who frequently looked to the UK for leadership and guidance.

The UK's standing at the conference was very high and I am very grateful for all the long hours of hard work put in by all the members of the UK delegation to achieve this. A lot of good work has been done and I am sure we have laid the foundations for even greater success when the parties meet again in the Netherlands in 2007.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Global Opportunities Fund

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I will today lay before Parliament the Foreign and Commonwealth Office annual report on the global opportunities fund (GOF) 2003–04. This is the first such report which covers the financial year (FY) 2003–04.

Copies will be placed in the Library of the House. Additional copies can also be obtained from the Vote Office. A copy will also be available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/gof.

I launched the GOF in May 2003 to focus the FCO's programme spending more closely on our priorities; and to bring greater professionalism to our programme and project management work. It has made an impressive start. This report provides an overview of the GOF programmes and describes project activity. It also contains a section on lessons learned and a forward look to the current FY.

HEALTH

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council met on 6 and 7 December. Items on the agenda relating to health were covered on 6 December. Items for discussion were: a co-ordinated approach to combat HIV/AIDS in the European Union and its neighbourhood; European Commission proposals for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medicinal products for paediatric use; and the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on nutrition and health claims made on foods. I represented the United Kingdom.

Ministers welcomed the European Commission's approach, as set out in its working paper "A Co-ordinated Approach to Combat HIV/AIDS in the EU and its Neighbourhood", but agreed that further work would be needed at all levels. The UK called on the European Commission to provide a clearer picture of where EU resources were currently targeted on HIV/AIDS and an analysis of how effective these investments had been. The UK stressed the need for the EU to work closely with the global fund. The UK also stressed its commitment to working with member states to develop a vaccine following the announcement in the UK on World AIDS Day (1 December) on exploring the use of advance purchase agreements to create the right financial incentives for pharmaceutical companies to invest in research.

The Council discussed, for the first time, the European Commission proposed regulation on paediatric medicines. The European Commission presented the proposal, setting out the principal objective of improving the health of the children of Europe by increasing the development of medicines for use in children. The UK did not intervene.

The Council had its first discussion of the Commission's proposal to harmonise rules for labelling foodstuffs with health and nutrition claims. The Council's exchange of views was structured around presidency questions focused on the key issue of nutrient profiles, the proposed method of determining whether claims should be allowed. The UK's position was that the impact on business had to be proportionate to the objectives, and that full stakeholder consultations on the details of implementation would be needed.

Ministers adopted Council conclusions on a European response to emerging zoonotic diseases without any discussion.

HOME DEPARTMENT

European Community Association Agreement with Turkey

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): Further to my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary's statement on 17 June about Ken Sutton's report on allegations about the handling of applications under the European Community association agreements (ECAA), work has continued on next steps. This work includes putting in place procedures and guidance for the agreement with Turkey, consistent with Mr. Sutton's recommendation that full account is taken of experience in handling applications under other association agreements. In order to ensure that all applications are considered robustly and consistently, applications under the European association agreement with Turkey have not been considered whilst this work has been continuing.

Following the Court of Appeal judgement in Dari and Tum *v.* Secretary of State for the Home Department and the recent reference of the case to the European Court of Justice, procedures and guidance will be put in place to manage applications made at port under this association agreement. Guidance will be published on the Immigration and Nationality Directorate website shortly. Applications for entry clearance will continue to be considered under the current rules. In country applications will continue to be held while new guidance is prepared plus operating procedures developed.

It is now our intention to begin consideration of applications for leave to enter at ports from 5 January 2005 and to resume a service for application made for leave to remain promptly once procedures are in place.

A further announcement will be made in due course.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Priorities and Budget 2005–08

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Ian Pearson): Following consultation on the Government's draft priorities and budget for Northern Ireland which was launched on 12 October 2004, I am today setting out the Government's priorities and spending plans for the Northern Ireland Departments for the period 2005–06 to 2007–08.

When devolution was suspended in Northern Ireland we pledged that we would work tirelessly to bring about an early restoration of devolved Government. We have and will continue to strive to bring this about so that the issues and plans set out in the priorities and budget can become the responsibility of Ministers accountable to a Northern Ireland Assembly. However, until then we are determined to continue to deliver on our plans to address the challenges facing Northern Ireland and ensure the delivery of better public services.

The resources underlying these priorities and budget proposals were largely determined by the outcome of the national spending review 2004 (SR 2004), as announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 12 July 2004. These resources have been supplemented by forecast local rates revenue and the use of the borrowing power available under the reinvestment and reform initiative over the next three years. This is a substantial allocation and provides for continuing real growth in public expenditure by Northern Ireland departments, reaching in excess of £9 billion by 2007–08.

The priorities and budget which we are publishing today sets out the Government's priorities for Northern Ireland and how we plan to use the resources available to us to pursue these over the next three years. In reaching final decisions on resource allocations my Ministerial colleagues and I have listened carefully to the issues raised and concerns expressed during the consultation of the draft proposals, and where it has been possible we have taken action to address these concerns.

These plans will continue to build on the progress made by the former Northern Ireland Executive under devolution and continued by the Northern Ireland ministerial team since devolution was suspended. Our vision for the future of Northern Ireland is for a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust and the protection and vindication of human rights for all. Our key objective therefore is to develop a strong economy and a society that is fair for all. In pursuing this objective we must ensure that all available resources are used to the best possible effect. That is why this budget will ensure that investment is matched with reform, and steps will be taken to improve public sector performance and efficiency, ensuring that increased resources have maximum impact on the delivery of key front line services.

The three key themes and associated objectives underpinning these plans are:

> Economic competitiveness—to make Northern Ireland a more competitive and productive region.
>
> Building equality and community cohesion—to increase opportunity for all and ensure stronger communities.
>
> Better public services—to ensure excellent and efficient public services for all.

In order to meet these objectives we have set ourselves targets across a number of important priority areas, where the proposed outcomes are intended to deliver the changes needed to ensure the achievement of our vision for Northern Ireland. The ministerial team will concentrate on these targets, monitoring them closely to ensure that they improve policy making and provide better public services for the people of Northern Ireland.

For economic competitiveness, we have set targets of reducing the productivity gap with the rest of the UK; increasing the proportion of the working age population who are economically active; and by July 2007 opening up the electricity market to all consumers. These and other actions will help generate the conditions to enable the economy to become more competitive at national and international levels.

We want to encourage increased expenditure on research and development, to optimise the exploitation of Northern Ireland's world class telecommunications structure and achieve a competitive, sustainable and reliable energy market to improve competitiveness and stimulate enterprise. Through Invest NI we will provide support for companies to become more competitive through the development of their capabilities.

We also recognise the importance of workforce skills as a driver for economic change and growth. Increasing productivity and competitiveness, improving public services and addressing social disadvantage will all require a substantial increase in the overall skills of the workforce. One of our top priorities, therefore, is to improve the level of skills and qualifications in Northern Ireland, and we will do this by reforming key elements of the vocational education and training system.

In building equality and community cohesion, we are committed to building on our strong legislative and public policy frameworks to progress our goal of a more equal and inclusive society with strong, cohesive communities in which differences are accepted, respected and celebrated. We will continue to ensure that equality considerations are mainstreamed into policy development. Through promoting social inclusion (PSI) initiatives we will continue to support joint working across Departments, in partnership with statutory agencies and voluntary and community organisations to promote a more inclusive society.

Tackling poverty and disadvantage remain key priorities and we will build on new targeting social need by bringing forward a new anti-poverty strategy. We want to combat poverty by supporting people to move from welfare to work and increase benefit uptake through targeting vulnerable groups. We are also determined to reduce the number of households living in poverty through co-ordinated policy and action across the social security, health and education sectors. Through the implementation of the neighbourhood renewal strategy we aim to narrow the gap between those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of Northern Ireland. Support for victims and survivors remains a priority and as Northern Ireland emerges from conflict it is important that we pay particular attention to the citizens of tomorrow. To this end, a 10-year strategy for children and young people will be taken forward and we will continue to support the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Investment in health remains a top priority for the Government in Northern Ireland. The budget provides for a rise of 23 per cent. in current spending on health over the next three years. This will enable investment in priority services such as renal, cancer and other critical care areas and will provide for enhancement to community, primary and intermediate care services, services for the elderly and those with mental illnesses.

We need to ensure that the major increases in funding for the health and social care sectors that have taken place since 1997 are used to deliver the best possible care and treatment, and improve the overall health of the population. It is in this context that an independent review of health service delivery in Northern Ireland has been commissioned. The review will be led by Professor John Appleby of the Kings Fund and will examine the effectiveness and efficiency of health service delivery. The review will report initial findings to Ministers in April 2005 with the final report scheduled for publication by summer 2005.

Current spending on Education will increase by 11 per cent. over the budget period and capital investment will increase by 62 per cent. A high quality education system remains a key priority for the Government and these expenditure allocations will allow us to take forward a programme of education reform that will change and improve substantially what children learn, how they learn, and the environment within which they learn. These reforms will produce significant benefits for children, for society and for the economy. They will also allow us to maintain a focus on improving literacy and numeracy standards, particularly among disadvantaged pupils, and continue to address the requirements of children with special educational needs.

The priorities and budget also provides for an unprecedented growth in capital investment in Northern Ireland's public service infrastructure, with levels of investment planned to grow to over £1.2 billion a year in each of the next three years. The reinvestment and reform initiative (RRI), launched in May 2002, remains a key enabler of the major improvements required to Northern Ireland's infrastructure, particularly in the major public services of health, education, roads, public transport, water and sewerage. The Strategic Investment Board was established in 2003 to help drive forward the reinvestment and reform initiative by improving expertise in procurement and spearhead the development of public private partnerships. Major investment programmes do of course take several years to deliver which means we need to plan several years ahead to ensure we allocate investment funds effectively. That is why the Strategic Investment Board has drawn up a longer term 10-year draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland which is also being published today for consultation.

In seeking to deliver better public services a key focus of these plans is on efficiency and the reallocation of resources released through efficiency improvements to priority front line services. These plans include targets for the public sector to deliver efficiency gains of 2.5 per cent. each year over the next three years, at least half of which will release resources for reallocation to priority front line services. As a part of this, the administration costs of civil service departments are being held flat at 2005–06 levels over the next three years and civil service numbers will reduce by 2,300 across all departments. We also plan shortly to publish proposals flowing from the review of public administration with a view to reaching final decisions in the summer of 2005 and implementation by 2008–09. The review will contribute to the more effective delivery of public services and efficiency savings arising from its implementation will be in addition to those in current plans.

This priorities and budget builds on the substantial real growth in public expenditure that has occurred in recent years and will continue for the next three years. From 2002–03 to the end of this budget period expenditure by Northern Ireland departments will have grown by a third in cash terms—or by 20 per cent. in real terms. Infrastructure investment is planned to grow by 30 per cent. next year alone, and this extra investment will be sustained in the years after that. The challenge now is to deliver the better services and modern infrastructure that people want and Northern Ireland needs to enhance its competitiveness and to build a fairer society.

I have placed copies of the "Northern Ireland priorities and budget 2005–08" document in the Library.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Paul Murphy): I have today received from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel Northern Ireland copies of the corporate plan for the period 2004–07 and the business plan for the financial year 2004–05. The corporate plan outlines the panel's aims, objectives and responsibilities for the period 2004 to 2007 and the business plan its targets and objectives in the financial year 2004–05. Copies of the plans have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

PRIME MINISTER

Council of Europe and Western European Union

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of Western European Union is as follows:

Tony Lloyd MP (Leader)

FULL REPRESENTATIVES

David Atkinson MP
John Austin MP
Malcolm Bruce MP
Sir Sydney Chapman MP
Tom Cox MP
Bill Etherington MP
Paul Flynn MP
Lord Judd
Baroness Knight of Collingtree
Christine McCafferty MP
Kevin McNamara MP
Edward O'Hara MP
Lord Russell-Johnston
Syd Rapson BEM MP
Sir Teddy Taylor MP
John Wilkinson MP
James Wray

SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES

Tony Banks MP
Baroness Billingham
Lord Burlison DL
Ann Cryer MP
Rt Hon George Foulkes MP
Jane Griffiths MP
Mike Hancock CBE MP
Baroness Hooper
Rt Hon Lord Kilclooney
Humfrey Malins CBE MP
David Marshall MP
Alan Meale MP
Gordon Prentice MP
Geraldine Smith MP
Lord Tomlinson
Dr Rudi Vis MP
Robert Walter MP
David Wilshire MP

SOLICITOR GENERAL

Pre-Trial Interviews with Witnesses

The Solicitor-General (Harriet Harman): My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General has made the following Ministerial Statement:

The report setting out my conclusions on the issue whether in principle prosecutors should be able to interview witnesses in criminal trials has been published today. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

In reaching those conclusions I have been informed by the results of a public consultation, conducted on my behalf by the Crown Prosecution Service, and by the views expressed to me by senior members of the judiciary.

In England and Wales prosecutors are not entitled to interview witnesses before trial, even when they are key witnesses whose credibility may be critical to whether a prosecution should go ahead or not. If my vision of the CPS as a world-class prosecuting service, admired and respected, and seen by all as a champion for victims and justice is to be realised, this must change.

The public rightly expects prosecutors to prosecute criminal offences, robustly, promptly and fairly and to bring to trial only those against whom there is an adequate and properly prepared case (and whose prosecution is justified in the public interest) and that prosecutors have confidence in the reliability of the evidence. Logic dictates that this expectation can only be met if prosecutors are able to interview witnesses about their evidence before trial.

I have therefore concluded, for the reasons set out in the report that the position ought to change so that prosecutors should have the ability in the future to interview witnesses, subject to safeguards including a code of practice and appropriate training.

I believe that the changes recommended will strengthen the prosecution process and contribute to putting victims and witnesses at the heart of criminal justice and more at ease with the criminal justice process.

The Director of Public Prosecutions fully supports the conclusions that I have reached. The report sets out my proposals for implementation of these conclusions through a working group to consider best how to pilot these proposals and further discussions with the professional bodies.

I am grateful to all those who contributed their time and expertise by responding to the consultation paper.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 21 December 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Parliamentary Questions

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): Access rights to information held by public authorities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 come into force on 1 January 2005.

The following guidance sets out procedures for dealing with complaints about the handling of requests for information. This guidance makes clear that there should be no inconsistencies between the provision of information in answer to parliamentary questions and information given to citizens under the Freedom of Information Act.

Where a member is dissatisfied with the answer to a parliamentary question there are well-established parliamentary routes Members may follow such as: tabling further questions; seeking to raise the issues on the Adjournment; or a complaint to the Public Administration Committee, that may seek to follow up the issue with Ministers.

Alternatively Members may write to the appropriate Minister expressing their concern and setting out the information they are seeking. Such correspondence shall be treated by departments as a new request for information requiring a full internal review and fresh decision. The request will attract all the provisions and appeal mechanisms afforded by the Freedom of Information Act, including if necessary an appeal to the Information Commissioner.

Any investigation by the Information Commissioner will therefore be related to the correspondence to the Minister and not extend to the answer to the parliamentary question or to any other parliamentary proceedings which are protected by parliamentary privilege. In addition the Cabinet Office plans to issue revised guidance to officials on drafting answers to parliamentary questions taking account of the Freedom of Information Act.

DEFENCE

Baton Rounds (Northern Ireland)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 23 October 2002, I placed in the Library of the House details of the guidelines on the rules of engagement for the use of plastic baton rounds in Northern Ireland by the armed forces. We did this as an exceptional measure aimed at building confidence in Northern Ireland following a request from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

The guidelines were updated in the light of a recommendation made by the independent assessor of military complaints procedures and placed in the Library of the House on 15 May 2003.

The guidance has been further updated to take account of lessons learned from training and operations and as part of our commitment to review baton round guidance in consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Ronald Maddison

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I wrote yesterday to the solicitors acting for the Maddison family apologising for the fact that Ministry of Supply employees at the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment at Porton Down Wiltshire proceeded with a test involving Ronald George Maddison on 6 May 1953, which led to his death. This was undertaken notwithstanding the fact that an identical test on 4 May 1953 resulted in an adverse blood test result in one serviceman.

The Ministry of Defence has not received a formal claim for compensation from the next of kin of Mr. Maddison. However, any claim for compensation from his family would be considered favourably on the basis of the negligence referred to above.

The Ministry of Defence intends to challenge, by way of judicial review, the inquest verdict of unlawful killing.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Gypsy Sites

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am announcing today the publication for consultation of the new planning Circular "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites". The new Circular will replace DoE Circular 1/94 "Gypsy Sites and Planning".

The advice in the Circular covers the procedures to be followed in ensuring that the planning system recognises, protects and facilitates the traditional lifestyle of Gypsies and Travellers by identifying and making provision in developments plans for their land and accommodation requirements.

It is the Government's intention that the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities should be part of the mainstream of the plan-led system. The guidance contained in the Circular should result in a greater proportion of this need being provided for on sites allocated in development plans, providing greater certainty both for Gypsies and Travellers and local residents and reducing the need for local authorities to enter into lengthy and expensive enforcement actions against unauthorised sites.

The new Circular also updates the definition of Gypsies and Travellers to reflect the fact that many stop travelling permanently or temporarily because of health reasons or caring responsibilities but still want to maintain their traditional lifestyle.

The consultation will run until 18 March 2005. Copies of the consultation documents have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and are available to download from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am today announcing the details of the successful bids under the second round of the Gypsy Site Refurbishment Grant for 2004–05. Under the first round, £4.82 million was allocated in April of this year, with a further £2.54 million now being paid in the second round.

The existing network of over 300 local authority authorised sites represents a valuable resource for Gypsies and Travellers. With the aid of this grant, local authorities are able to ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have access to high quality accommodation and that the networks of sites continues to meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community into the future. The successful bids are:

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (£10,425 for the Mary Street site).

East Cambridgeshire District Council (£42,700 for the First Drove site).

Herefordshire Council (£300,000 for the Graftons site).

Manchester City Council (£1,157,250 for the Fairholme site).

Shropshire County Council (£63,525 for the Craven Arms site).

The London Borough of Southwark (£820,875 for the Springtide and Burnhill site).

West Sussex County Council (£141,900 for the Horsgate site).

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children Act Report

The Minister for Children, Young People and Families (Margaret Hodge): I have today placed copies of the Children Act report for 2003 in the Libraries of both Houses. This statutory requirement, as part of the Children Act 1989 (s83(6)), is met each year by drawing together information relating to research, statistics and inspection findings, which are consolidated to create a report.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Biological Weapons Convention

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): Members will wish to be aware of the outcome of the recent discussions in Geneva on the two subjects set for discussion by states party to the biological and toxin weapons convention (BTWC) in 2004. States party were mandated to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on strengthening national and international efforts and existing mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases affecting humans, animals and plants; and on promoting common understanding and effective action on the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease.

On the concluding day of the meeting of states party to the BTWC, which took place from 6–10 December, there was agreement by consensus on a politically binding report where, inter alia, states party recognised the international aspect of these subjects and their relevance to the object and purpose of the BTWC, and agreed on the value of the following actions:

supporting the existing networks of relevant international organisations for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases and acting to strengthen the World Health Organisation(WHO), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) programmes, within their mandates, for the continued development and strengthening of, and research into, rapid, effective and reliable activities for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases, including in cases of emergencies of international concern;

improving, wherever possible, national and regional disease surveillance capabilities, and, if in a position to do so, assisting and encouraging, with the necessary agreement, other states party to do the same;

working to improve communication on disease surveillance, including with the WHO, FAO and OIE, and among states party;

continuing to develop their own national capacities for response, investigation and mitigation, in cooperation with the relevant international and regional organisations, and, if in a position to do so, assisting and encouraging, with the necessary agreement, other states party to do the same;

the sixth review conference in 2006 considering, inter alia, the further development of current procedures for the provision of assistance, by those in a position to do so, to states party in cases of alleged use of biological weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease.

The preceding meeting of experts held in Geneva in July had prepared the way for this political decision making. At this earlier meeting, levels of attendance and participation were excellent with 87 states party contributing to international discussion and sharing of expertise on these subjects. For the United Kingdom, experts from across Whitehall made nine presentations which were well received.

That so many other states party sent experts from capitals and took an active part is an indication to us that delegations recognised both the importance of the two subjects and also the value of the work programme more generally in contributing to strengthening the BTWC. The success of the July meeting was reinforced at the December meeting of states party where states party, in their national statements, welcomed the substantial exchange of information.

The United Kingdom was grateful to the chair, Mr. Peter Goosen of South Africa, for the efforts he made to achieve consensus on a report that reflected the commonality of views and approaches that were demonstrated at the meetings. We believe that this has again demonstrated to the wider arms control community that the intersessional process has value.

The continued success of this process is particularly important to the UK as we look ahead to 2005 and our own chairmanship of the meetings of states party. Ambassador John Freeman, UK permanent representative to the conference on disarmament, was elected on the final day of this year's meeting as the chair. The subject for consideration will be "the content, promulgation, and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists". UK national preparations for this began in 2003. We have held a series of seminars with representatives of academia, NGOs and industry to seek their views and to assist in developing our ideas for next year. Ambassador Freeman wrote to states party on the

final day of the 2004 meeting with some initial thoughts on the work ahead. The UK will continue to work co-operatively both nationally and internationally through 2005.

I will keep the House informed of developments and outcomes in 2005.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): During my oral answer to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1515, I said the following: "Following an initiative by my predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), we now have a legally enforceable EU code of conduct on arms sales". I would like to clarify this statement. The code of conduct, as incorporated into the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria, serves as binding statutory guidance to the Government in our assessment of applications for strategic export licences under section 9(5) of the Export Control Act. The Government is therefore required to have regard to the criteria set out in the Code when assessing such applications. Export licensing decisions may be subject to judicial review, including on the basis of failure to have proper regard to such criteria. However, the code of conduct is not per se directly legally enforceable before the UK or European courts.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Passports

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): I have decided that the process of establishing the identity of passport applicants needs to be strengthened by introducing a requirement for some applicants to attend a passport office in person. The UK Passport Service has commenced work on the practical arrangements, including the acquisition of some 70 new premises, and expects to be able to introduce the requirement from late 2006. Adults who have not previously held a British passport in their own name will then be required to attend for a short meeting before a passport can be issued. This will be combined with enhanced checking of the information applicants provide.

This is part of a programme of improvements being developed by the UKPS to meet current and future needs for the security of passports as documents of identity. The programme will counter the misuse of passports in connection with illegal immigration, organised crime and terrorism. It will give individuals better protection from identity theft.

The UK is one of only a few western countries that does not currently require personal attendance before issuing a passport. The ability to send applications by post allows fraudsters to apply in false or stolen identities without fear of arrest and to make multiple applications in the hope of getting one through. It allows the possibility of passports being applied for with the photographs of people who are outside the UK and seeking to enter illegally. With the enhancements to the security of the passport document itself that biometric technology will bring, I have decided it is time to make equivalent enhancements to the process of establishing identity before issuing passports.

The requirement may in future be extended to other types of passport applications. This will certainly be the case if enrolment of fingerprints or iris images becomes necessary for passports or for identity cards. The process and infrastructure that UKPS is developing will therefore have the ability also to act as a building block for a future ID card enrolment network and system.

Kent Acts Report

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): The Kent Acts report has been published today by command of Her Majesty. Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and in the Library.

The report highlights how the implementation of the Kent County Council Act 2001 and the Medway Council Act 2001 (the Kent Acts) in Kent has contributed to overall falls in acquisitive crime in the county and asserts that national legislation would, if enacted, have benefits.

Further consultation will be undertaken in the new year to fully investigate the case for national legislation.

Budd Report

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Sir Alan Budd has today delivered the report of his investigation into the handling by the Home Office of the application for indefinite leave to remain submitted by Leoncia Casalme in April 2003.

I welcome the report and thank Sir Alan and his team for their hard work in producing it so quickly. I particularly welcome his statement that he received full co-operation from the previous Home Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) and Home Office officials and that he does not believe that there was any attempt to destroy, conceal or withhold documents or information that was relevant to the inquiry.

The report sets out in detail how this case was handled and we need to learn from it. What went wrong here is that a case in which a Minister turned out to have a personal interest was dealt with, without that interest being clearly recorded. I have therefore asked the Permanent Secretary to ensure there are clear and formal rules for handling and recording all cases that are drawn to Ministers' attention.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside took full responsibility for this matter and resigned last week. I believe on the basis of this authoritative report the matter should now be closed.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

National Physical Laboratory

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): In 1998 the DTI entered into a PFI

arrangement with the contractor, Laser (Teddington II) Limited (Laser), to build and subsequently maintain new science facilities at the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington.

During construction of the facilities, Laser encountered a number of technical difficulties that significantly delayed completion and increased costs to a level that threatened the project's viability. In July this year Laser approached the Department with a proposal that an agreed termination of the PFI project represented the best available option for resolving these difficulties.

DTI has now agreed with Laser and their lenders to the termination of the PFI project on the following basis. The Department has made a termination payment of £75 million, based upon the principles of the termination provisions of the project agreement. This means that full ownership of, and responsibility for, the new facilities, which have an insurance value of £120 million, have been transferred back to the DTI.

Following this termination payment, net liabilities of £73 million on DTI's balance sheet will be extinguished and the Department will make significant cash savings from fees that would otherwise have been made in payment for the new facilities between now and 2023.

This is an example of how the risk transfer principles of PFI arrangements can operate, with appropriate risks being ultimately transferred to the private sector to the benefit of the taxpayer.

DTI intends, wherever possible, to put to competitive tender the construction work needed to complete the facilities. DTI has also exercised its right to step into, in place of Laser, the support services management agreement, made between Laser and Serco Limited for the provision by Serco of support services at the site, thereby ensuring uninterrupted provision of these services.

The DTI is confident that these arrangements will enable the outstanding work on the new facilities to be completed so that NPL can continue to deliver world-class science and vital support for innovation, consistent with value for money for the taxpayer.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Occupational Pensions (Directive 2003/41/EC)

The Minister for Pensions (Malcolm Wicks): We have today placed in the Library copies of the transposition note setting out how the UK Government are implementing the provisions of directive 2003/41/EC, which concerns the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provision.

Although the Pensions Act 2004 is the principal legislative vehicle for fulfilling this obligation, there will also be some limited use of the regulation-making provisions of the European Communities Act 1972.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 25 November 2004

SCOTLAND

Departmental Websites

Mr. Nigel Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland for how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199648]

Mrs. McGuire: None, all the Office's outstanding written questions were answered before Prorogation.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199688]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office website (www.scotlandoffice.gov.uk) conforms to the Priority 1 requirements of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 29 November 2004

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Answers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199657]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development (DFID) makes every effort to answer all questions substantively before Prorogation, however, this is not always possible. Where this was the case, hon. Members were issued with a response that followed parliamentary guidelines to notify them of this. Where hon. Members did not receive a substantive response they have the option to re-table the question in this session.

During the last Parliamentary Session of 2003–04, there were 2,296 written parliamentary questions tabled to DFID, of which, 13 questions could not be answered substantively in the time available before Prorogation.

Millennium Development Goals

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress is being made on each of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on the basis of existing funding levels; and when each MDG will be met *(a)* including China and *(b)* excluding China. [199599]

Hilary Benn: The latest edition of DFID's annual publication 'Statistics in International Development' which is available in the House of Commons Library, summarises progress towards the MDGs. Globally, progress has been most noticeable in reducing income poverty and that the goal of promoting gender equality has also seen notable improvement. The water and sanitation targets for MDG 7 have also moved in the right direction. The prospects are less good for the goals related to universal primary education, improving child and maternal health and combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, though some countries have seen substantial improvements in these areas, showing what can be done with the right policies and targeted resources. Goal 8 highlights action required by developed countries and progress is being made, although further effort is still needed.

The UK has recently completed a report which sets out its own contributions towards meeting the MDGs, this will be published early in 2005.

The UN has recently produced a chart showing progress towards selected indicators related to the MDGs by region. Although this represents the most thorough assessment currently available, it does not provide an analysis excluding China. The most recent UN progress report on the Millennium Development goals (October 2004) can be accessed via http://millenniumindicators.un.org.

Water/Sanitation Projects

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is on instituting sector budget support for water and sanitation in cases where main partner governments do not prioritise water and sanitation in their poverty reduction strategies; and if he will make a statement. [200113]

Mr. Thomas: In our dialogue with our partner governments, we regularly discuss the priority placed on water and sanitation in their poverty reduction strategies.

Whether DFID will consider, along with other donors, to provide sector budget support in a particular country will depend on the specific situation in that country.

CABINET OFFICE

Demonstration (Cabinet Office)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) if she will make a statement on the anti-war demonstration held inside the Cabinet Office on 23 November; how many demonstrators entered the building; at what time they *(a)* entered and *(b)* were removed; and what security status was in force at the time; [200265]

(2) what period of time elapsed before the intruders in the Cabinet Office on 23 November were challenged. [200266]

Ruth Kelly: On Tuesday 23 November at approximately 1.15 pm a security officer stopped a member of the public who was attempting to enter the Cabinet Office at 70 Whitehall without a pass. While the officer was dealing with this person, who was agitated, three further persons were able to gain entry. These individuals gained access to an office inside the building where they were, within a few minutes, stopped and challenged by security guards who had pursued them. The police were called, and they arrested, and removed all four protestors from the building at 1.30 pm.

The security status at the time was black special.

Identity Passes

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether identity passes are required to be worn within the Cabinet Office building. [200267]

Ruth Kelly: Yes.

PRIME MINISTER

Casinos

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list meetings he has attended with representatives of casino operators from outside the UK in the last 12 months, broken down by *(a)* location and *(b)* purpose; and if he will make a statement. [200372]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Foster) on 10 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 691–92W.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on his recent discussions in Washington with President Bush on climate change; and what progress was made; [200692]

(2) if he will make an assessment of the degree to which *(a)* President Bush and *(b)* the US Administration believe that climate change is happening. [200750]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Southall (Mr. Khabra) at Prime Minister's questions on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1350.

Departmental Press Briefings

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* departmental officials briefed reporters for (i) *The Sun* and (ii) *Daily Mail* in respect of information used in articles published on 23 November on alleged terrorist plots to attack targets at Heathrow and Canary Wharf in London. [199633]

The Prime Minister: All contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code, the Civil Service Code, the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers and Guidance on the Work of the Government Information Service.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Prime Minister whether his Office's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199692]

The Prime Minister: Recent work on the Downing Street website was part of an on-going commitment to ensure that the website is fully compliant with World Wide Web Consortium's guidelines. Further work is planned to ensure that the entire site meets the highest possible standards of accessibility.

Iraq

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Prime Minister what reports he received during 2002 from the International Atomic Energy Agency concerning Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. [200148]

The Prime Minister: Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1051, the IAEA was tasked with submitting reports to the UN Security Council every six months on the status of its investigations into Iraq's nuclear weapons programmes. Reports were produced on 10 April 2002 and 16 October 2002 although there were no in-country inspection activities until November 2002 as a result of the refusal of the Iraqi Government to allow entry by the inspection teams. Following the resumption of inspections after UNSCR 1441 the IAEA presented an interim report on progress together with an interim assessment of Iraq's Declaration to the Security Council on 19 December 2002.

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister on what date he was made aware of the July 2003 withdrawal by the intelligence services of the reports on Iraq's weapons. [200037]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 285W.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister when he read the final report of the Iraq Survey Group. [199662]

The Prime Minister: I read the report when it was published on 6 October 2004.

President Chirac

Tony Baldry: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what discussions he has had with President Chirac on the Commission for Africa; [199598]

(2) what discussions he has had with President Chirac on the International Financing Facility. [199600]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of issues with President Chirac during the UK-France summit held in London on 18 November 2004, including the Commission for Africa and the International Financing Facility.

I also refer the hon. Member to the Communique and Declaration on Africa, which is available on the Foreign Office website, and to the press conference I held with President Chirac, which is available on the No. 10 website.

HEALTH

Health Service Deficits (South-west)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the financial deficits for the financial year ended 31 March were for *(a)* the Peninsula strategic health authority, *(b)* Plymouth Primary Care Trust, *(c)* South Hams and West Devon Primary Care Trust, *(d)* Plymouth Hospital NHS Healthcare Trust and *(e)* Devon Partnership Trust; and what the anticipated financial deficit of each of them is in the year to 31 March 2005. [199728]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

£000

	Surplus/(deficit)	
	Outturn 2003–04	Forecast outturn 2004–05
South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority (SHA)	10,220	0
Plymouth Primary Care Trust (PCT)	0	0
South Hams and West Devon PCT	545	0
Plymouth Hospitals National Health Service Trust	(7,753)	0
Devon Partnership NHS Trust	93	0

The forecast outturn for 2004–05 is based on the latest information published by the South West Peninsula SHA.

In-patient Accommodation

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress in ending mixed-sex wards in Hampshire; and if he will list hospital premises where inpatient accommodation does not comply with the standards set by his Department. [200271]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has set three objectives to support the delivery of single-sex accommodation, designed to deliver single-sex sleeping accommodation, segregated bathroom and washing facilities and to safeguard the mentally ill. The objectives apply to all national health service organisations providing inpatient accommodation.

All inpatient hospital accommodation provided within Hampshire is fully compliant with the standards which we have set.

Nurses

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what targets his Department has set for nurse numbers in each of the next 10 years, expressed as a *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole-time-equivalent figure. [199923]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS Plan set a target for an extra 20,000 nurses by 2004, over a 1999 baseline, the Government's Manifesto made a further commitment for 20,000 nurses by 2005, over a 2000 baseline, and "Delivering the NHS Plan" set an expectation for increasing the qualified nursing workforce by 35,000 by 2008 over 2001 levels.

These targets and expectations are on a headcount basis, and all have been met and exceeded. The table shows the increases against the targets and expectations.

	NHS Plan	Manifesto	Delivering the NHS Plan
Target/expectation	20,000 by 2004	20,000 by 2005	35,000 by 2008
Change	1999–2003	2000–2003	2001–2003
Headcount	56,722	50,407	35,978
Whole-time equivalents	43,552	37,905	27,558

Sources:
Department of Health non-medical workforce census
Department of Health general and personal medical services statistics

There has been a further headcount increase of 10,000 between September 2003 and March 2004.

There are no additional targets for increasing the nursing workforce, though we expect further annual increases. It is for local national health service organisations to determine the number of nurses needed locally.

Oxleas NHS Trust

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will meet *(a)* the Chief Executive of Oxleas NHS Trust and *(b)* the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead to discuss the matters raised by the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead in his letter of 13 October; [199605]

(2) what discussions he has had with the *(a)* South East London Strategic Health Authority and *(b)* Private Finance Unit regarding Oxleas NHS Trust on the matters raised with him by the hon. Members for Erith and Thamesmead and Bexleyheath and Crayford (Mr. Nigel Beard) on 14 July. [199606]

Mr. Hutton: Departmental officials have been in touch with South East London Strategic Health Authority about this matter.

I met with my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Thamesmead and the hon. Member for Bexley Heath and Crayford earlier in the year and wrote to both of them regarding Oxleas earlier this month. I have no immediate plans for a further meeting.

Peninsula Strategic Health Authority

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget of the Peninsula Strategic Health Authority is for the current financial year. [199727]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The budget figure for the South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority for the financial year 2004–05 is £4.563 million.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ahmadiyya Community

Sue Doughty: Affairs what representations he has received regarding attacks by anti-Ahmadiyya agitators upon Ahmadis in Bangladesh; what representations he *(a)* has made and *(b)* is making to the Government of Bangladesh regarding the protection of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh; and if he will make a statement. [200436]

Mr. Alexander: We have received many representations on this subject from interested NGOs,including the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK and hon. Members of this House. We share their concerns about attacks and organised incitement against the Ahmadiyya community. We have both bilaterally and together with EU colleagues, regularly raised issues of religious persecution and intolerance with the Bangladeshi authorities urging them to ensure that minorities, not least the Ahmadiyyas, are suitably protected, that every reported crime is promptly and fully investigated, that the perpetrators of

crimes against religious minorities are brought to justice and that firm action is taken against incitement. We shall continue to do so.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairswhat representations he *(a)* has made and *(b)* is making to the Government of Pakistan regarding the protection of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan, particularly with regard to the blasphemy laws in that country; and if he will make a statement. [200437]

Mr. Alexander: The British Government takes a serious and very concerned view of all cases of religious intolerance and persecution.

We have raised our concerns, bilaterally and together with our EU colleagues, about religious persecution and the blasphemy laws with the Pakistani Government on a number of occasions. The EU has called upon the Pakistani authorities to take all possible measures to reform the Blasphemy Laws; to strengthen institutional and legal safeguards while these laws remain in force; and to make the abuse of these laws an offence. The EU urged the Government of Pakistan to continue its efforts to bring the perpetrators of crimes against religious minorities to justice, and to ensure that every reported crime is promptly and fully investigated.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Pakistan and will make representations to the Pakistani Government when this is called for.

Anti-Semitic Broadcasts

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken to tackle anti-semitic broadcasts from Middle East countries. [199741]

Mr. Rammell: Her Majesty's Government deplores anti-semitism in any form. It is not our policy to seek to control broadcasts in other countries. But we look to all governments to promote the right to freedom of religion and the enjoyment of all human rights without distinction on the basis of race or religion. We engage closely with the Arab media in the UK and in the region, including funding for training programmes to help them improve standards. The EU tabled a resolution at this years UN Commission on Human Rights which urges all states, in conformity with international human rights standards, to take action to combat intolerance and intimidation based on religion or belief.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of the effect anti-semitic broadcasts in Arab media have had on prospects for a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. [199742]

Mr. Rammell: We deplore anti-semitism wherever it occurs, as we deplore racism and xenophobia in any form. We have consistently called on all parties in the Middle East to do everything within their power to desist from incitement and to curb extremism. We expect all media outlets to broadcast in a responsible and objective manner. We have not made any specific assessment of the effect anti-semitic broadcasts in the Arab media on prospects for a resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict.

Arab Media

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the influence of Arab media on extremist Islamic movements in the UK. [199743]

Mr. Rammell: The Arab media represents a wide spectrum of views, including those of modernisation and reform. We have not undertaken a measure of its impact. We expect all media outlets to broadcast in a responsible and objective manner. We engage closely with the Arab media in the UK and in the region, including funding for training programmes to help them improve standards. Where Arab media groups operate within the UK, they must operate within UK law. Possible offences of inciting racial hatred or violence under the Public Order Act can be referred to the police.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those areas of competence that will remain exclusive to the United Kingdom if the proposed EU Constitution is adopted. [199800]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Epsom and Ewell (Chris Grayling) on 1 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 429W.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200179]

Mr. MacShane: Following the commitment made to Parliament by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 4 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1456W, we are aiming to publish by the end of the year a comparative analysis of the EU Constitution with existing EU treaty provisions. This document will address points *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)*. In addition, with regard to point *(b)*, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr. Lewis) on 5 July 2004, *Official Report*, columns 592–93W which sets out moves from unanimity to QMV in the EU Constitution. With regard to point *(e)*, I refer the hon. Member to the statement on the Charter of Fundamental Rights made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 9 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 133–36WS. With regard to points *(d)* and *(f)*, the EU Constitution will not in itself determine the quantity of EU legislation, or any costs associated with its implementation. The introduction of a rigorous subsidiarity mechanism involving national parliaments should provide a check on new legislation and help focus it better when it is necessary. For more detail on the subsidiarity mechanism and the Government's position on the treaty as a whole I refer

the hon. Member to the White Paper on the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe which the Foreign Secretary published on 9 September (Cm 6309).

Mr. Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which parts of the text of the Constitutional Treaty for the EU are additional to provisions contained in treaties already ratified; and in which treaties those parts of the text which do not introduce new provisions were originally contained. [200447]

Mr. MacShane: Following the commitment made to Parliament by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 4 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1456W, we are aiming to publish by the end of the year a comparative analysis of the EU Constitution with existing EU treaty provisions. This document will compare each article of the new treaty to the existing treaties, identify which provisions are new, highlight moves to QMV and co-decision and extension of competence.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary Session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199644]

Mr. Straw: Seven. Of the seven, five were tabled shortly before the end of the parliamentary Session.

Spain

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Spanish authorities over *(a)* the remarks of the Spanish coach and *(b)* events at the matches during the recent international football matches in Spain. [199596]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no discussions with the Spanish authorities about the remarks of the Spanish football coach, but he discussed the incidents at the Spain *v.* England football match with his Spanish counterpart, Sr Miguel Angel Moratinos, the day after the game.

Sr Moratinos condemned the racist chanting that we witnessed that evening, and agreed that such behaviour cannot be tolerated anywhere in society. I spoke to my Spanish counterpart, Sr Navarro, the morning after the match along similar lines, and expressed our outrage at the chanting.

Vietnam

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on his Department's efforts to open up the Vietnamese economy to *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international trade; [199563]

(2) if he will make a statement on his Department's plans to assist Vietnam in becoming a market-based economy. [199564]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DfID) have adopted a joint approach to assist Vietnam in becoming a market-based economy, and in developing its domestic and international trade.

Key to this is a common position on Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in particular an insistence on accession on terms that benefits all Vietnamese people, particularly its poor. The European Commission (which negotiates on behalf of EU member states on WTO accession) has been encouraged by the British Government to recognise, in the negotiation process, Vietnam's low income country status.

In terms of developing Vietnam's domestic economy, DFID is working with the World Bank to support reform of state-owned enterprises (SOE). Activities focus on the restructuring of three general corporations to reduce state direct investment, and encouraging the private sector to play a stronger role. This area of reform is crucial to free-up government resources for social service provision and poverty reduction. DFID further supported the revision of key investment and enterprise laws to create a level playing field for business, and to reduce state intervention in company decision-making and the allocation of resources.

In the longer term, DFID, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, is helping the Government of Vietnam to identify and develop policies to make the transition to a market-based economy work in favour of the poor, through improving their access to land and other natural resources, through increased opportunities for employment and income generation, and through linking up the domestic markets within which they supply labour to global markets, for example those that supply supermarkets. For further information on this intervention I refer my hon. Friend to the Making Markets Work Better for the Poor website: www.markets4poor.org.

TREASURY

Building Societies

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints were lodged against building societies in the most recent period for which figures are available. [199592]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) does not publish figures on complaints against individual firms.

The FOS's Annual Review 2003–04 indicated that it had resolved a total of 76,704 complaints in the year ending 31 March, 13 per cent. of which were concerning Banks and Building Societies.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Economic Secretary will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 25 October (PO Ref: 5/10798/2004). [200324]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 5 October (PO Ref: A/01567/2004). [200326]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Dentistry

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will commission research on the advantages and disadvantages of giving tax relief to cover the cost of private dental insurance for patients of dentists who have opted out of the NHS and where there is no alternative NHS dentist with an open list in the local primary care trust area. [200146]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have no plans to commission research on tax relief for expenditure on private dental insurance.

EU Accounts

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he proposes to take if the EU Court of Auditors refuses to approve the EU accounts in its next annual report. [200304]

Mr. Timms: The Government are already discussing with the Commission and the European Court of Auditors how the annual Statement of Assurance may be improved to give a better assessment of progress. The Government also consider that it is important to continue to take an active role in promoting best practice in financial management and control in the Commission and in member states.

European Union

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the UK's net contribution to the EU budget was over the last 10 years for which figures are available. [199813]

Mr. Timms: The UK's net contributions to the EC budget for the financial years 1994–95 to 2003–04 are set out as follows:

	£ million
1994–95	1,641
1995–96	3,852
1996–97	2,293
1997–98	2,567
1998–99	4,111
1999–2000	3,325
2000–01	4,318
2001–02	1,477
2002–03	3,080
2003–04	3,264

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what duty of care his Department has to ensure that the UK contribution to the EU budget is used for appropriate purposes. [200302]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury takes the lead in negotiating EC annual and multi-annual budgets, as well as agreeing funding for new spending programmes, in line with UK priorities. The Treasury also leads in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of effective financial controls in the Commission and in member states to enable the budget to be spent appropriately and in accordance with the rules.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the level of fraud in the use of the EU budget in *(a)* the last year, *(b)* the last five years and *(c)* the last 10 years. [199809]

Mr. Timms: Member States are required to report irregularities detected in the own resources, agriculture and structural funds budget sectors to the European Commission and the European Anti-Fraud Office. These figures are reported each year in the Commission's annual "Fight against Fraud" report. Reported irregularities may include suspected fraud cases, but the Commission does not identify the extent of fraud. Most irregularities are not fraud but genuine errors where the money paid out is usually recovered.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what questions his Department has put to *(a)* the European Commission and *(b)* the European Court of Auditors during the last year regarding the Commission's accounting practices. [199811]

Mr. Timms: Treasury officials have taken the opportunity to question the Commission on a quarterly basis at the Council's Budget Committee and on other occasions with particular reference to its progress with the implementation of new accounting procedures. They have been assured that progress is on target for the implementation of full accruals accounting with effect from January 2005. There has been no formal discussion with the European Court of Auditors on this issue.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations his Department has made, since August 2002, to *(a)* the European Commission and *(b)* the EU Court of Auditors to ensure that UK funds have not been used inappropriately by EU institutions. [199812]

Mr. Timms: Treasury officials played a major role in shaping the new Financial Regulation which now includes rules to govern the accountability of EU officials and requires the setting of "SMART" objectives (and the evaluation of their achievement) for all Community spending to ensure that the budget is spent appropriately. It also required the Commission to modernise its accounting practices. Officials continue to maintain close contact with the Commission and may assist in resolving specific UK issues. But while we maintain informal contact with the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on these issues, the ECA is prohibited under the treaty from taking instructions from any government.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has raised concerns about the rate of turnover in senior accounting staff in the European Commission in the last three years. [199808]

Mr. Timms: This is a matter for the European Commission.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his Department's policy to encourage the European Commission to adopt double-entry book-keeping. [199810]

Mr. Timms: Article 134 of the Financial Regulation, which came into effect on 1 January 2003, requires the European Commission to use double entry book keeping.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications for the competitiveness of Eurozone countries of the strengthening of the euro against the US dollar. [199804]

Mr. Timms: Based on all relevant factors, the Government will publish on 2 December their assessment of macro-economic prospects for the euro area in the 2004 pre-Budget report.

Financial Ombudsman

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints were received by the Financial Ombudsman Service in the latest period for which figures are available; how many of those cases were investigated; and in what proportion of cases investigated the complaint was upheld. [199591]

Mr. Timms: In the financial year ending 31 March 2004, the Financial Ombudsman Service received a total of 97,901 cases and resolved 76,704 cases. This data and breakdown was published in June 2004 by the Financial Ombudsman Service in their annual review and report and financial statements, 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004.

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to increase the *(a)* powers and *(b)* penalties available to the Financial Services Ombudsman to deal with building societies who provide inadequate services to those seeking mortgages. [199593]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 established the Financial Ombudsman Service as an independent organisation to help resolve individual disputes between consumers and financial firms.The Financial Ombudsman Service has no powers to impose penalties against financial firms. This role is fulfilled by the Financial Services Authority, which may impose sanctions on firms, including building societies, which breach its rules.

The Financial Services Authority assumed responsibility for regulating first charge mortgages, including advising and arranging on mortgages, on 31 October 2004.

General Insurance Regulation

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many advertisements for the new regime for General Insurance Regulation were placed in the national press by the Financial Services Authority in each month of 2004. [199545]

Mr. Timms: The FSA ran two advertising campaigns advertising the new regime for General Insurance regulation in 2004. The first campaign, between late May and July, consisted of 15 advertisements in the national press and nine advertisements in selected trade press. The second campaign in October consisted of a total of 48 advertisements, in the national press.

Inheritance Tax

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the extent to which *(a)* the public and *(b)* banks and building societies have been made aware of the recent agreement negotiated by him for the release of sufficient assets of deceased individuals to pay inheritance tax on their estates in order to permit probate to be granted; and if he will make a statement on the steps taken to publicise that agreement. [200272]

Dawn Primarolo: The Direct Payment Scheme was introduced on 31 March 2003 in order to help streamline the process for paying inheritance tax. The Inland Revenue worked closely on the design with the British Bankers' Association (BBA) and the Building Societies' Association (BSA) to produce a straightforward process. The scheme allows participating financial institutions to transfer funds belonging to a deceased person directly to the Revenue and eliminates the need for administrators to obtain funds from outside the estate in order to secure probate.

Members of the BBA and the BSA were given details of the scheme before it was launched. It was announced by press release and on the Inland Revenue website. Everyone dealing with a deceased person's estate who will need to pay IHT liabilities is given full details of the scheme and how to use it in the guidance notes they receive with their IHT return form. Callers to the Probate and IHT help line are also given guidance on the scheme when discussing payment of IHT. Information on the scheme is still available on the Revenue website at; http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/howtopay/iht-direct-pay-scheme.htm.

Since the scheme was introduced there has been a steady increase in take up, with approximately 4,000 payments a year made through this route.

The Inland Revenue monitor the scheme closely and have invited feedback and have stayed in contact with the BBA and the BSA.

International Cricket Conference Headquarters

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on taxation issues affecting the proposed International Cricket Conference Headquarters in London. [200363]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have received a number of representations from a variety of organisations regarding taxation issues affecting International Sports Federations such as the International Cricket Council.

Mortgages

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what further steps he proposes to take to protect the financial interests of those applying for mortgages in the UK. [199590]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Services Authority assumed responsibility for regulating first charge mortgages, including advising and arranging on mortgages, on 31 October 2004. The FSA will review how the new regime is functioning in due course.

The Government intend to bring forward legislation to bring Home Reversion schemes under FSA regulation as soon the Parliamentary timetable allows.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to regulate shared appreciation mortgages. [200214]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Services Authority assumed responsibility for regulating first charge mortgages, including advising on and arranging such mortgages, on 31 October 2004. The regime incorporates shared appreciation mortgages.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199643]

John Healey: One, which first appeared on the day before prorogation.

Petrol/Diesel (Duty)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue his Department has received from the duty paid on petrol and diesel oils in each of the last three years. [200314]

John Healey: Historic petrol and diesel fuel duty revenue figures are published by HM Customs and Excise in the Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin, a copy of which is available on the UK Trade information website (www.uktradeinfo.com).

Post-16 Statistics

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many 16 and 17 year olds are not in employment, full-time education or training. [200159]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Steve Webb dated 29 November 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. (200159)

The latest estimate from the Labour Force Survey is that, in the three months ending in September 2004, a total of 198,000 (seasonally adjusted) 16 and 17 years olds in the United Kingdom were not in employment (including Government training schemes) or in full-time education.

These estimates from the LFS, as with any statistical sample survey, are subject to sampling variability.

Staff Numbers

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff there were in his Department in each year since 1997. [200185]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 8 July 2004 to the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb), *Official Report*, column 811W.

Tax Credits

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the constituency of Weston-Super-Mare are in receipt of *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit. [199770]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the reply the Economic Secretary gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1712W to the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Paul Farrelly).

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to reply to the letter of 26 August from a constituent of the hon. Member for Vale of York regarding child tax credit. [199835]

Dawn Primarolo: The hon. Member's letter to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions was passed to the Inland Revenue, who replied to the hon. Member on 17 November.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average length of time to process *(a)* a child tax credit and *(b)* a working tax credit application is. [199836]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, Column 1510–1511W.

Tobacco Smuggling and Fraud

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the proportion of tobacco products consumed in the UK which had evaded duty through *(a)* smuggling and *(b)* fraud in each of the last five years. [199470]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise do not separately estimate the proportion of illicit tobacco products which evade duty through *(a)* smuggling and *(b)* fraud. However, the latest combined smuggling and fraud estimates, for cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco, are available in HM Customs and Excise's paper "Measuring and Tackling Indirect Tax Losses", published alongside the pre-Budget report in December 2003, a copy of which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Treasury Audit

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the European Commission to undertake a treasury audit. [200303]

Mr. Timms: The European Commission has no reason to audit the Treasury as it has no direct responsibility for the management of EC funds.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Beekeeping

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to maintain the regulation of *(a)* Varroasis and *(b)* European Foul Brood in beekeeping.[199527

Alun Michael: The Department has no plans to maintain a statutory enforcement role for the control of varroasis. Since the disease is now endemic we plan to remove it from the list of notifiable bee diseases in 2005.

In the case of European foul brood, we are working towards delisting this as a notifiable disease by the end of 2007–08. This will be subject to making satisfactory progress with trials of the 'shook swarm' technique, which the National Bee Unit is currently evaluating.

Refrigerator Recycling

Mr. Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Environment Agency report auditing the refrigerator recycling scheme was published; and if she will make a statement. [199947]

Mr. Morley: The results of an audit of refrigerator and freezer treatment facilities have been discussed with the site operators and the Environment Agency expects to publish the key findings shortly.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if she will make a statement. [199624]

Mr. Caborn: Our main website complies with all of the Consortium's Priority 1 checkpoints, most of Priority 2 and some of Priority 3. The RNIB has undertaken an audit to assess accessibility of our main website. We will work with the RNIB to address the outstanding issues over the next six months.

Football (Racism)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has made to the Spanish authorities over *(a)* the remarks of the Spanish coach and *(b)* the actions of the crowd at the recent international football matches in Spain. [199595]

Mr. Caborn: None. However, I wrote to the Spanish Minister of Sport last week about the incidents of racism at the England games in Spain last week. The Football Association has also written to the Spanish Football Association.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assistance she has given to *(a)* the Football Association and *(b)* the Kick It Out campaign over the issue of racism in football. [199597]

Mr. Caborn: The Government fully supports the initiatives undertaken by football, including the campaign Kick it Out and the charity Show Racism the Red Card, to help eradicate racism in the sport. Through the Football Foundation, the Government (with its funding partners the FA and FA Premier League) provides £155,000 to the Kick it Out campaign, and £161,000 to Show Racism the Red Card.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Football Association on the sanctions available to *(a)* international referees, *(b)* participating teams and *(c)* international coaches or managers when faced with racism at international matches. [199601]

Mr. Caborn: None. There is no place for racism in sport—nor in modern society and I believe the strongest action should be taken, at the highest level, to ensure its eradiation from the game. I have written to the UEFA and FIFA expressing these points and I await their reply.

Gideon Hoffman

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether Gideon Hoffman is an employee of her Department; and if she will make a statement. [199726]

Mr. Caborn: Gideon Hoffman is a permanent employee of Her Majesty's Treasury on loan to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Licensed Premises

Mr. Beggs: What assessment she has made of whether additional policing costs arise from the extension and late opening of premises for the sale of alcohol. [199879]

Mr. Caborn: The reforms associated with the Licensing Act 2003 apply only to England and Wales. The regulatory impact assessment presented to Parliament when the Licensing Bill entered the House of Commons in March 2003 indicated that there should no additional costs to the police in terms of enforcing licensing law generated by the reforms. The reforms should however generate administrative savings for the police. The police are currently involved administratively in an average of 1.6 million licensing processes annually in England and Wales across the six existing licensing regimes that are merged into a single regime by the 2003 Act. The number of administrative processes in which the police are involved is expected to reduce to fewer than 200,000 annually once the Act becomes fully operational. The saving to the police in respect of administrative activity is estimated to be £45 million over a period of three years, which can be redeployed to frontline police work.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session her Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199651]

Mr. Caborn: Seven written questions did not receive a substantive answer at the end of the 2003–04 parliamentary session. Four of these questions were amongst 36 written questions tabled to DCMS in the week prior to prorogation.

At all times DCMS Ministers make every effort to answer written questions substantively before prorogation. However, this is not always possible. Where right honourable and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Satellite TV

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what controls are in place to ensure foreign satellite TV channels available in the UK are not broadcasting material which breaches UK laws on incitement to *(a)* racial hatred and *(b)* violence. [199744]

Estelle Morris: The regulation of such stations is principally a matter for their country of origin. Under the Television without Frontiers Directive, member states of the European Union are required to ensure that broadcasts do not contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality. The Directive also provides that broadcasts from another member state which manifestly, seriously and gravely infringe that requirement can be restricted.

The Broadcasting Act 1990 provides a power for the Secretary of State to proscribe a foreign satellite TV service if it has been notified to her by Ofcom. Ofcom may notify a service on the grounds that it repeatedly broadcasts material which offends against good taste and decency, or which is likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling. This can include services which incite racial hatred or violence.

Proscription means that it is an offence for anyone in the United Kingdom to perform certain acts connected with the service, including advertising it, advertising on it, supplying decoding equipment designed or adapted to be used primarily for receiving it, and supplying equipment or other goods in connection with its operation. The Secretary of State may proscribe a foreign satellite TV service only if that is compatible with the international obligations of the UK.

School Sports

Sandra Gidley: what assessment she has made of girls' attitude to sport in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools. [199962]

Mr. Caborn: There has been a number of previous reports over the years on the attitudes of young women towards sport. Sport England commissioned the University of Oxford to examine, systematically, UK published and unpublished qualitative research studies on children and adults' reasons for participation and non-participation in sport. They also reviewed attitudinal questions in recent UK published quantitative surveys on sport and physical activity. The report of this review "Understanding participation in sport and physical activity amongst children and adults" will be published in January 2005.

Some evidence from the draft report shows that school age girls do want to do sport and be physically active. There is also the need to offer them a choice of activities and on dress, as well as the ability to work in single sex groups.

Sport Spending

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the proportion of sports spending which benefits girls. [199961]

Mr. Caborn: At present, we do not have specific figures on the proportion of sports spending which benefits girls. However, over the past 10 years, about £2 billion of Lottery funding has been invested in sport and physical activity, and it is an imperative that each initiative, programme or scheme must demonstrate how women and girls will be specifically addressed.

Sport England is responsible for delivering the Government's sporting objectives in England. It is committed to creating opportunities for people to start in sport, stay in sport and succeed in sport.

Specific posts aimed at girl and women sports development across England have been funded through Sport England's Active Communities Development Fund.

Awards for All, another of Sport England's funding programmes, has targeted specific girl and women only groups in order to increase their grassroots participation in sport.

The Sport Action Zones have specifically targeted women and girl issues in sport. In addition, Sport England established "Girl Sport"—a programme that addresses dropout rates in sport by girls.

The Women's Sports Foundation's main source of funding is from Sport England, receiving £200,000 a year. The WSF is the UK's leading organisation dedicated to improving and promoting opportunities for women and girls in sport and physical activity.

The Government is investing £459 million into the national strategy for PE and School Sport which aims to increase the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and to 85 per cent. by 2008. This will have an impact on all children.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fisheries Conservancy Board

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions the *(a)* Chief and *(b)* Deputy Chief Executive of the Fisheries Conservancy Board carried out unassisted patrols in a FCB vessel in each of the last three years. [199859]

Angela Smith: The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive carried out no unassisted patrols in either 2002 or 2003. A total of nine unassisted patrols were carried out in 2004.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prosecutions have been recommended by bailiffs of the Fisheries Conservancy Board in each of the last three years; and how many prosecutions have resulted. [199860]

Angela Smith: The number of prosecutions recommended by Fisheries Conservation Officers of the Fisheries Conservancy Board, the number of prosecutions taken forward by the board, and the number of successful prosecutions in each of the last three years are as follows:

	2001	*2002*	*2003*
Number of prosecutions recommended by Fisheries Conservation Officers	284	184	587
Number of prosecutions taken forward by the Fisheries Conservancy Board	280	178	586
Number of successful prosecutions	277	144	564

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions a Fisheries Conservancy Board vessel has been in the sole control of the *(a)* chief and *(b)* deputy chief executive without the designated skipper in each of the last three years; and if he will publish the log report of each such patrol. [199888]

Angela Smith: The chief executive and deputy chief executive have been in the sole control of a Fisheries Conservancy Board vessel on 10 occasions without the designated skipper. Both officers are qualified to skipper the board's north coast fisheries protection vessel.

The Fisheries Conservancy Board does not publish log reports that support its fisheries enforcement activities.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions the *(a)* chief and *(b)* deputy chief executive of the Fisheries Conservancy Board, accompanied by other FCB officials, carried out patrols on an FCB vessel in each of the last three years; and which areas were patrolled. [199889]

Angela Smith: The chief executive and deputy chief executive did not carry out any patrols accompanied by other FCB officials in 2002 or 2003. These officers undertook five patrols of the north Antrim coast with other FCB officials in 2004. The deputy chief executive also undertook a further patrol of the north Antrim coast, and one patrol of Lough Neagh, accompanied by FCB officials other than the chief executive in 2004.

Irish Republic (President)

Mr. Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make representations to the Government of the Irish Republic to change the title of the President of that country to a title which specifically excludes Northern Ireland. [200081]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The title of the said office is defined by the Irish Constitution and is therefore a matter for the Irish Government and people of the Republic of Ireland.

Larne-Belfast Rail Link

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the future development of the Larne-Belfast rail link. [199846]

Mr. Spellar: There are no plans at this stage to invest further on the section of the Belfast to Larne line between Belfast and Bleach Green which is in good condition following recent upgrades. A project to relay the section of the line between Bleach Green to Whitehead has been approved by the Department and work is scheduled to commence in the spring of 2005 and be completed by December 2005. The remainder of the line from Whitehead to Larne forms part of the lesser used part of the railways network and I am currently considering future investment on these lines as part of the 2004 Spending Review taking account of the recent public consultation on this matter.

MOT Certificate

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on how many occasions in each year since 2000 the lack of an MOT certificate has been detected, broken down by district command unit. [200912]

Mr. Pearson: This information is not held in the format requested. These figures could only be compiled at disproportionate expense.

Priority Treatment (Ex-service Personnel)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons the Department of Health and Social Services does not provide the level of priority treatment for ex-servicemen and women provided elsewhere in the UK. [199552]

Angela Smith: Guidance was issued by the Department of Social Security in 1972 on hospital treatment for ex-servicemen and women which applied to England, Wales and Scotland, but did not apply in Northern Ireland. No equivalent guidance has been issued in Northern Ireland, although boards and trusts here have been asked by the Department to ensure that a safe and effective service is provided and that patients are treated according to their clinical priority.

Residential Accommodation (Care Costs)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in residential accommodation on a voluntary financing basis have been paid in full during the 12 week disregard period by each Health and Social Services Trust in Northern Ireland. [200353]

Angela Smith: The information requested by the hon. Gentleman could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tax Discs

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on how many occasions in each year since 2000 the non-display of vehicle tax discs has been detected, broken down by district command unit. [200911]

Mr. Pearson: This information is not held in the format requested. These figures could only be compiled at disproportionate expense.

Traffic Wardens

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will rescind the decision to change the role of traffic wardens in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [200352]

Mr. Pearson: The Police Service of Northern Ireland has taken the decision to withdraw from the enforcement of parking and waiting restrictions in order to concentrate resources on areas of greater policing priority.

As a result, the Roads Service of the Department for Regional Development, following public consultation in 2003, intends to introduce new primary legislation which will decriminalise parking offences and allow the responsibility for the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions to pass from the PSNI to DRD. It is expected that the legislation will be in place by mid-2005, with an operational scheme on the ground in mid-2006.

All existing Traffic Wardens and Senior Traffic Wardens will transfer with the function. Transfers will be in accordance with the provisions of the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 and Cabinet Office guidelines, which protect the rights of employees when a transfer of function occurs.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98; [200388]

(2) what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200408]

Mr. Pearson: The information sought by the hon. Member is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

DEFENCE

Galileo Project

17. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had on the military implications of the Galileo Project. [199370]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess).

Iraq

18. **Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in Iraq. [199371]

Mr. Hoon: The security situation in Iraq remains difficult with determined fanatics and terrorists opposing the building of a new, democratic, stable and secure Iraq. Iraqi security forces supported by the multinational force-Iraq, continue to conduct operations against this insurgency. The aim is to create the conditions within which Iraqi elections can take place in a safe and secure environment next January.

Regimental Structure

19. **Sir Archy Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the proposed new regimental structure for the Army. [199372]

Mr. Hoon: The Army is restructuring in order to ensure it is better prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. The new structure will ensure that the Army is more resilient, robust and focused to deliver operations at brigade level while retaining its core ethos of being a war-fighting Army able to conduct large scale operations alongside our allies.

As part of this work the infantry will reorganise in order to accommodate both the ending of the arms plot and the consequence of reducing the number of infantry battalions by four. The decision to cease the arms plot means that the infantry must reorganise on the basis of regiments of two or more battalions. This is because in the future infantry battalions will be fixed by role and, largely, by location and it will be necessary to move individuals between battalions for experience, variety and development. Multi-battalion regiments will allow this movement, enabling us to deliver the real advantages of ending the arms plot in terms of operational capability and family stability, while still preserving the benefits and traditions of a regimental system.

The Black Watch

21. **Mr. Francois:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he expects the amalgamation of the Black Watch with other Scottish regiments to take place. [199374]

Mr. Hoon: The infantry will need to reorganise on the basis of multi-battalion regiments. No decisions have been taken on exactly how this will be implemented within each infantry division, and the consequent impact on individual infantry battalions. Nor have any decisions been made on the timing of implementation of the changes.

Arctic Convoy Veterans

22. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to recognise the service of Arctic Convoy veterans. [199375]

Mr. Caplin: As we approach the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War the whole House will I am sure agree that we owe all veterans, including those who served in the Arctic Convoys, our greatest respect and thanks for that service.

However and specifically, service on the convoys to Northern Russia during the Second World War has already been recognised by the award of the Atlantic

Star. The qualifying criteria for the medal, are published in Command Paper 6633 in May 1945 and Command Paper 6833 in June 1946 and are indeed quite specific.

International Terrorism

23. **James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action the Ministry is taking with *(a)* EU and *(b)* NATO allies to combat the threat of international terrorism. [199377]

Mr. Hoon: The Government are involved in a large number of counter terrorism initiatives with our EU and NATO partners, across the spectrum of civilian and military activity. The majority of these fall in areas which lie beyond the responsibilities of the Ministry of Defence. The issue is regularly discussed at all levels including in my own meetings with EU and NATO counterparts.

There is a significant role for armed forces in helping to tackle the underlying causes of terrorism through stabilisation and peace keeping operations. Both NATO and the EU are making a vital contribution to international peace and security through operations in countries where terrorism might flourish.

Battalion Regiments

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the single battalion regiments that are to be merged into two, three or more battalion regiments will retain their *(a)* old regiment names in some form, *(b)* individual uniforms, *(c)* traditions and *(d)* recruiting areas when downgraded into a battalion under the new regimental structure. [200014]

Mr. Ingram: The Army is currently working on the detail of the future infantry structure and an announcement will be made before the Christmas Recess. Where possible, the history, traditions, and names of famous regiments will be incorporated into the new structure, and the linkages with traditional recruiting areas maintained.

British Defence Exports

Mr. Simon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps he has taken to promote British defence exports on the international market. [199369]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence provides a high standard of support to legitimate defence exports. The Defence Ministerial team plays a full part in this work. Last year we helped United Kingdom defence industry to win orders worth nearly £5 billion, including the sale of Hawk to India worth £800 million.

Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who appoints the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe. [200020]

Mr. Hoon: NATO Allies have agreed that the post of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe will be permanently filled by a United Kingdom incumbent. The appointment of the incumbent to the post is approved by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, the Secretary of State for Defence, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, and Her Majesty The Queen.

Electoral Registration

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British service personnel were registered as entitled to vote *(a)* in 2001 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [199533]

Mr. Caplin: Information is no longer held on the number of Service personnel registered to vote.

Ministerial Speech

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will place in the Library a copy of his recent speech at the University of Nottingham. [199664]

Mr. Hoon: I did not use a prepared text for my discussion with students at the University of Nottingham on 12 November 2004.

Naval Shipbuilding

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry regarding the maintenance of a strategic capacity for naval shipbuilding in the UK. [199364]

Mr. Hoon: Building on the solid base established by the Defence Industrial Policy we remain fully committed to maintaining a strategic capacity and capability for naval shipbuilding and ship repair in the United Kingdom. MOD and DTI officials and senior representatives from the shipbuilding industry have regular, positive and constructive meetings to discuss the current and future programme.

VJ Day Anniversary

Mr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he and his ministerial colleagues have had with *(a)* the armed forces and *(b)* veterans on arrangements for commemorations of the 60th anniversary of VJ Day. [199373]

Mr. Caplin: I announced on 27 September that there will be Government-supported ceremonies at the Cenotaph on Sunday 8 May to mark the 60th anniversary of VE Day and on Sunday 21 August to mark VJ Day. Both the Burma Star Association and the Royal British Legion have welcomed our support for these ceremonies, which are, of course, in addition to the events to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on 10 July next year which I announced the House on 1 March 2004.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Claims Direct

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will publish correspondence sent by Mr. Peter Ross to the Lord Chancellor's Department in January 2000, relating to Claims Direct. [199748]

Mr. Lammy: Mr. Ross did write to the Lord Chancellor's Department in January 2000 about Claims Direct, however we regret that in spite of extensive searches of our departmental records we cannot locate the actual correspondence requested.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what meetings were held between 1997 and 2003 between representatives of Claims Direct and *(a)* the Lord Chancellor's Department and *(b)* the Department for Constitutional Affairs; and what was discussed at each such meeting. [199747]

Mr. Lammy: The information available from our records is that officials attended meetings with representatives of Claims Direct on three occasions between 1999 and 2000 to discuss the implementation of the Access to Justice Act 1999 in respect of conditional fees and after the event insurance. Officials met with representatives of Claims Direct on one occasion in 2002 to discuss a number of matters relating to the operation of the personal injury market.

Independent Appellate Authority Hearing

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Independent Appellate Authority will set a date for a hearing for Flordeliza Moody, the wife of a constituent of the hon. Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey. [199528]

Mr. Lammy: The appeal papers for Ms Flordeliza Moody, a national of the Philippines, are currently with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) of the Home Office. Officials from IND have confirmed that the appeal bundle will be forwarded to the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) by Monday 29 November 2004. The IAA will list the appeal for a full hearing and the confirmation of this hearing date will be promulgated to the appellant and her UK representative.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what meetings were held by Ministers in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its predecessor Department with (i) Mr. Colin Poole and (ii) Mr. Tony Sullman, directors of Claims Direct, to discuss the work of Claims Direct. [199754]

Mr. Lammy: None.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs for how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199656]

Mr. Leslie: None.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Gas Disconnections

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the protection afforded to vulnerable consumers at risk of disconnection by their suppliers under provisions for entry under a Justice's Warrant in the Rights of Entry (Gas and Electricity Boards) Act 1954, as amended by the Gas Act 1995 and the Utilities Act 2000; and if she will make a statement. [199585]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Rights of Entry (Gas and Electricity Boards) Act 1954, as amended, includes extensive warrants procedures that a supplier must follow if it wishes to enter premises to disconnect any customer. These procedures are under the jurisdiction of the courts. In addition, the arrangements set out in the Energy Retail Association's September 2004 report, "Protecting Vulnerable Customers from Disconnection", which have been put in place by the gas and electricity suppliers, should ensure that, as far as possible, vulnerable customers are not disconnected.

Radioactive Contamination

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what reports she has received from the UK Atomic Energy Authority in respect of the recent incidences of plutonium contamination of operators at the pulsed column laboratory at the UKAEA Nuclear Installation at Dounreay; and if she will make a statement. [199636]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has been informed of the potential intake of radioactive material by operators at the pulsed column laboratory at Dounreay. The regulators, Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Inspectorate, are aware and are monitoring the situation. The contamination was discovered through what are called "routine nose-blow checks". Biological monitoring of fifteen operators is currently being undertaken , which will take a number of weeks to complete. The initial four results from biological monitoring have shown doses of less than 4 per cent. of the annual limit for radiation workers. As a precaution the building where the operators were working has been closed, pending further investigation.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will estimate the volume of radioactively contaminated soil within the perimeter fence at the Hunterston A nuclear power plant; what the identity of the contamination is; what its average activity is per cubic metre; what the source of the contamination was; when *(a)* the operator and *(b)* her Department first learned about the contamination; whether information on volumes of contaminated soil is to be included in the 2004 edition of the National Radioactive Waste Inventory; what plans have been made for the removal of the contaminated material; and what the estimated cost is for dealing with the contamination. [199661]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The estimated volume of land that could potentially have been impacted by historical operations dating back to the 1970's at Hunterston A is around 81,000 cubic metres. This is the figure quoted in

the draft Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) plan recently published for consultation and also forms part of the Life Cycle Base Line for Hunterston A.

Radioactively contaminated land at Hunterston A is mainly a result of the station's operational phase that ceased in 1990. Some of the contamination came from the on-site open-air cooling ponds through wind blown contamination within the site. Some were caused by spills from effluent lines within the site boundary and steps were taken at the time to prevent a recurrence.

As part of the decommissioning strategy for Hunterston A, an extensive programme of work is currently taking place to better quantify the volume and levels of radioactively contaminated land and their significance and to evaluate and formulate options for the future management of this land. Until this work is completed, it is not possible to estimate the costs involved.

The current (2001) Radioactive Waste Inventory contains relevant information and I am advised by the site operator that the 2004 Inventory is expected to contain similar information.

Renewables Obligation

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, in her review of the Renewables Obligation, she will take account of the impact on renewable obligation certificate trading of companies that have defaulted on their payments because of *(a)* insolvency and *(b)* other factors; and what additional (i) incentives and (ii) sanctions are being considered to make the scheme more effective. [199411]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A separate consultation on the Renewables Obligation Order 2005 is addressing, among other things, the impact on renewable obligation certificate trading of companies that default on their payments to the Renewables Obligation buy-out fund. The consultation paper includes a number of proposals to make the scheme more effective including surcharges on late payments and mutualisation in the case of defaults. Mutualisation in this context refers to other suppliers making additional payments to make good the shortfall caused by a defaulting supplier. These additional payments would then be recycled to suppliers who met their share of the obligation through renewable obligation certificates, in the same way as the main buy-out fund.

This consultation, which precedes the main Review of the Renewables Obligation, closes on 1 December. Amendments are planned to take effect from 1 April 2005.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will publish the submissions made *(a)* to her in advance of her review of the Renewables Obligation and *(b)* to that review. [199412]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: This has already been done. Following the consultation on the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Renewables Obligation, which was conducted in August/September 2004, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry published a full version of responses received. These can be accessed at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/renewables/policy/terms_of_reference.shtml.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State intends to publish the responses to all subsequent consultations in the same way, except where an organisation has requested confidentiality, in line with Government guidance on good practice in relation to consultations.

TRANSPORT

Aircraft Noise

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance his Department has given to local authorities with regard to the impact of aircraft noise on growth areas. [200477]

Charlotte Atkins: Government guidance on the impact of aircraft noise is provided for English local authorities in the planning guidance note PPG 24-Planning and Noise.

Exeter/Barnstaple Railway

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the Exeter to Barnstaple railway line. [199828]

Mr. McNulty: The Exeter to Barnstaple route is currently part of the Wessex Trains franchise, which, when it expires in 2006, will form part of the new Greater Western franchise. Under the Strategic Rail Authority's Community Rail Development Strategy, published on 22 November, the line is proposed to be designated as a Community Rail line. The Strategy aims to increase the number of passengers using rural rail lines.

Pedestrian Deaths

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrian deaths in road accidents there were where the pedestrian had over 100 mgs of alcohol per 100 mls of blood in each of the last six years; and what percentage of all pedestrian road accident deaths in *(a)* England and *(b)* each region this represents in each case. [199920]

Mr. Jamieson: The estimated percentage of pedestrian fatalities in Great Britain who had blood alcohol levels over 100 mg/100 mls are shown in the following table, for the last six years for which data is available. These are published annually in "Road Casualties Great Britain: Annual Report". Estimates are not available for England or by region.

Percentage of pedestrian fatalities with blood/alcohol 100mgs/ml

	Percentage
1997	35
1998	35
1999	37
2000	33
2001	38
2002	40

Rail Crossings (South-west)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* projects and *(b)* proposals there are in the South West for (i) bridge and (ii) tunnel rail crossings. [200093]

Charlotte Atkins: There are two provisionally approved local authority projects and one Highways Agency project that include rail bridges. A further two projects are currently awaiting ministerial decisions. There are no projects that include tunnel rail crossings.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road crossings with automatic gates over high speed tracks there are in *(a)* the South West region and *(b)* Somerset. [200094]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for Network Rail. Network Rail will write to the hon. Member.

Rail Services

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to announce his decision on *(a)* the Integrated Kent Rail Franchise, *(b)* the CTRL domestic service pattern to East, South and North Kent and *(c)* placing orders for the new rolling stock for the CTRL domestic services. [199719]

Mr. McNulty: Four bidders have pre-qualified for the Integrated Kent Franchise competition and an initial Invitation to Tender was issued on 5 January 2004. The final Invitation to Tender is being finalised and the SRA intends to issue this to bidders before the end of the year. A stakeholder briefing setting out the future service pattern for Kent services will be published at the same time. Hitachi was announced as preferred manufacturer on 27 October this year and is working with industry partners to finalise technical issues. Rolling stock contracts should be signed early in 2005.

Seaford Route

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make a statement on the impact of the Seaford noise preferential route on the proposed housing development at Imberhome in East Grinstead. [200480]

Charlotte Atkins: The Seaford noise preferential route (NPR) from Gatwick Airport is stipulated by the Secretary of State by Notice under s.78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982. When it is allocated to the operators of aircraft departing towards the east, they are required to turn on a heading between East Grinstead and Crawley Down towards the navigational beacon at Seaford.

Adherence to the NPR is assessed on the basis of a 'swathe', 1.5 km to each side of the centre-line of the route. Aircraft which have reached an altitude of 4,000 ft may be 'vectored' by air traffic controllers onto a different heading without being deemed to have deviated from the NPR.

It is for interested parties to assess the relevance of the Seaford route, and of airport operations and noise controls generally, to any planning process, having due regard to planning guidance.

Silk Mills Crossing

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of how many cars used the Silk Mills train crossing in Taunton over the high speed train line from London to the South West each day on average in the last period for which figures are available. [200202]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for Network Rail. Network Rail will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what dates for heavy engineering works to the tracks at the Silk Mills crossing in Taunton have been made available to the Somerset Highways Authority for putting a bridge over the crossing into place. [200204]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for Network Rail. Network Rail will write to the hon. Member.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education Funding

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the reason is for the difference between the figure given for per pupil funding in the answer to the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire of 9 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 591W, in the last Session of Parliament, and that which appears on his Department's website at www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/pnattach/20030079/4.htm. [200105]

Mr. Miliband: Figures given in the press notice of 2 May 2003 (to which the hon. Member refers) contained forecasts of some grants. In particular, demand-led grants such as Teachers' Threshold Payments and Performance Pay grants are distributed throughout the year, and School Standards Grant allocations were still being finalised at this stage, and are subject to revision during the year as figures are audited.

In addition, the figures used in the answer on 9 November included the pensions transfers to Education Formula Spending made in 2003–04 and 2004–05. The series published on 2 May 2003 excluded the extra money transferred at this time for comparability with previous years.

Faith Schools

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on Government policy on faith schools. [200147]

Mr. Miliband: The Government believes parents should have a range of schools to choose from, including faith schools. We welcome more faith schools in the maintained sector where they have the support of parents and the local community. Decisions about the establishment of new faith schools are made at local level by the School Organisation Committee for the local authority concerned or by the Schools Adjudicator if the Committee cannot reach a unanimous decision.

Where an LEA holds a competition to establish an additional secondary school, faith promoters, along with others, may bring forward proposals to set up a particular type of school. The Secretary of State will make the decision based on the merits of the proposals and taking into account local views.

Key Stage 2 Results

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils attained Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in each subject tested in 2003–04, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [199914]

Mr. Miliband: The Key Stage 2 data for 2004 has not yet been analysed to parliamentary constituency level. This will be available shortly after the Primary School Achievement and Attainment Tables are published on 2 December 2004 and will be placed in the Library. For years prior to 2004, the information requested has already been placed in the Library.

National Healthy School Standard

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost to public funds of the National Healthy School Standard has been in each year since 1999; and what funding he expects it to receive in each year until 2009. [199461]

Mr. Twigg: The National Healthy School Standard (NHSS) has been jointly funded by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health since 1999. The following table shows the funding allocated to the NHSS from both Departments since 1999. Information on any additional support from local NHSS programmes or from local education authorities is not held centrally.

£ million

Year (allocations)	*From the Department of Health*	*From the Department for Education and Skills*	*Total*
1999–2000	2	2	4
2000–01	6	2	8
2001–02	5.8	2	7.8
2002–03	5.5	2	7.5
2003–04	5.5	2	7.5
2004–05	5.5	2	7.5

The DfES and Department of Health are committed to continued funding of the programme and the exact levels are still under discussion.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199653]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Of the 4,791 questions answered by this Department in the 2003–04 session, 18 did not receive a substantive reply. Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively before Prorogation, but this is not always possible, especially with questions that are tabled in the last week before the House rises. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Personalised Learning

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the Barnet pilot scheme for personalised learning. [199491]

Mr. Miliband: The DfES, working in conjunction with London LEAs, is funding a project to develop an ICT strategy for London which has identified personalised learning—tailoring education to the needs, interests and aptitudes of individual pupils within groups so as to enable them to fulfil their potential—as a key area for further development. As part of that ICT strategy, the Barnet project, supported by the London Grid for Learning, is utilising the broadband infrastructure in place across London and the LGfL services to provide individual access for schools, teachers, and pupils, at appropriate levels, to educational resources and information. This initiative by Barnet is a good example of the way LEAs are working with others to develop effective strategies for raising standards through personalised learning. We look forward to seeing the results of the project, and identifying how the lessons learned can be spread more widely.

Primary School Places (Washwood Heath)

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the availability of primary school places in Washwood Heath, Birmingham. [199682]

Mr. Miliband: It is for each LEA to plan the supply of school places in its area to ensure that there are sufficient places, schools serve the needs of their local communities and provide good quality education in the most cost-effective way. The Government believe that decisions concerning the supply of school places are best taken locally by the main partners in the provision of education, who have knowledge of local needs.

School Toilets

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what regulations exist to ensure that children's toilet facilities in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools meet the standards set for adults in health and safety at work legislation; and if he will make a statement. [199762]

Mr. Miliband: The number of toilets required in both primary and secondary schools is detailed in the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999. There are no specific regulations governing the condition and maintenance of toilet facilities but there is a general requirement that every part of a school and of the land provided for a school shall be such that the health, safety and welfare of the occupants is reasonably assured.

Somerset Schools

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of total capital expenditure on schools in Somerset for each year from 1997 to 2005; and if he will make a statement. [199896]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows capital resources allocated to Somerset local education authority and its schools since 1997. Decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are taken locally in accordance with locally prepared asset management plans.

Somerset LEA

	£000
1997–98	3,845
1998–99	7,786
1999–00	6,988
2000–01	15,948
2001–02	11,760
2002–03	16,045
2003–04	19,249
2004–05	21,831
2005–06	10,001

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Barker Report

Mr. Soames: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what assessment he has made of the environmental *(a)* costs and *(b)* consequences of the Government's policy for implementation of the Barker Report. [200479]

Keith Hill: In addressing the specific recommendations in Kate Barker's report the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will adopt the same principles as set out in the Communities Plan.

The Government has accepted her central recommendation that there should be a step change in housing supply and has announced its intention to set a national market affordability goal (as recommended by Barker) as part of a package of measures by the end of 2005.

In order to inform this, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is commissioning two closely-related research projects. The first will analyse the relationship between housebuilding and affordability. The second, jointly commissioned with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, will look at the implications of various levels of additional housebuilding for sustainable communities. It will consider a broad range of impacts, including social, environmental, economic and fiscal.

The projects will be completed by mid-2005 in good time to inform and allow for consultation on the setting of a national affordability goal.

Deprivation

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list deprived areas within Greater London. [200313]

Keith Hill: The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (ID04) can be used to assess the most deprived local authorities in Greater London. There are six presentations of multiple deprivation at the district level. These six summary measures capture the main ways in which multiple deprivation can be described at this level. No single summary measure is favoured over another, as there is no single best way of describing or comparing districts.

The following local authorities in Greater London score within the top 10 most deprived districts in England in at least one of these six measures:

Hackney

Tower Hamlets

Islington

Newham

Haringey

The following local authorities in Greater London score within 11–20 most deprived districts in England in at least one of these six measures:

Southwark

Lambeth

Camden

Westminster

Electricity

Mr. Soames: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultation he has held with electricity providers in the south-east on his plans for new building targets. [200478]

Phil Hope: As part of the Regional Assembly's process of developing the regional spatial strategy for the South East that will replace the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9), there will be a number of opportunities for the electricity providers to comment on the emerging strategy. The Regional Assembly will be consulting on alternative spatial options in the new year.

House Prices (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what the average price of a *(a)* one bedroom, *(b)* two bedroom and *(c)* three bedroom house in the Greater London area is. [199676]

Keith Hill: Estimates of the average price of residential properties sold within the Government Office Region of London and where completion took place during September 2004 are in the table:

Size of dwelling	*Average price (£000)*
one bedroom	172,603
two bedrooms	225,446
three bedrooms	276,933

Notes:

1. The figures are based on a sample of purchases made with a mortgage. Cash purchases, which represent about 18 per cent. of sales in London, are not represented in the sample.
2. The estimates shown are simple average prices, not mix-adjusted. In other words the price estimates could be influenced by the types of properties sold and the location of these sales in September.
3. The estimates are based on the following numbers of purchases: 633 one-bedroom properties; 1,264 two-bedroom properties and 1,005 three-bedroom properties.

Source:

Survey of Mortgage Lenders

Housing

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the cost *(a)* in total and *(b)* per unit of new housing of providing or upgrading the necessary infrastructure to support the 20,000 homes that are due to be built in Kent Thameside in the next 20 years. [199428]

Keith Hill: To date, £54 million has been allocated to support projects across Kent Thameside to 2006. There are also a number of North Kent wide initiatives that Office of the Deputy Prime Minister support separate to this and further programme funding to be allocated.

These resources are spread across a range of projects that support the creation of infrastructure necessary for growth and creation of Sustainable Communities. These include mixed use developments, transport infrastructure, public realm and environmental projects, and community facilities. It is therefore not possible to give a meaningful estimate that corresponds to individual housing units.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister works in partnership with other Government bodies and the private sector to secure full costs for infrastructure. Our funding therefore acts as a catalyst for growth including the 30,000 homes and 50,000 jobs planned for Kent Thameside. There are also a number of other government funding streams that support the Thames Gateway agenda—for example Department for Transport/Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's £200 million Community Infrastructure Fun and Department of Health's additional £40 million for Growth Areas. The Department for Transport's funding towards CTRL Domestics and the Fastrack bus system are also significant funding commitments towards area growth.

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the grants his Department has made for housing developments in the London Borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years. [199670]

Keith Hill: Grants made for housing development in the London Borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years are as follows:

Supported Capital Grant—2002–03 £11,803,000. 2003–04 £8,455,000 and 2004–05 £5,954,000

Disabled Facilities Grant—2002–03 £204,000. 2003–04 £210,000 and 2004–05 £204,000

And the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme (ADP) 2002–03 £11,971,073. 2003/04-£15,818,000.

Challenge fund—a two-year investment programme favouring modern methods of construction £5,599,000.

2004–06 current ADP allocation is a two-year programme totalling £17,453,411.

The London Housing Board allocated £900,000 in 2004–05 to Wandsworth as lead authority in the Empty Homes scheme, for the South West London sub regional partnership.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to reintroduce minimum room sizes for dwelling houses; and if he will make a statement. [199913]

Phil Hope: The Government have no plans at present to introduce minimum room size standards for new dwellings into the Building Regulations.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the decision-making structures will be for the Housing Market Renewal initiative in Liverpool. [199815]

Keith Hill: The Merseyside market renewal pathfinder is governed by a board established in August 2002. It is an unincorporated association with an independent chair. Liverpool city council acts as the accountable body for the pathfinder. The Board has adopted a formal Memorandum of Agreement which sets out its governance arrangements. The current membership of the board is tabled as follows:

Name	*Position*	*Organisation*
John Glester	Independent	Independent Chair
Cllr Flo Clucas	Lead member	Liverpool city council
Cllr George Davis	Lead member	Wirral metropolitan borough council
Cllr Ian Maher	Lead member	Sefton metropolitan borough council
Allison Cooke	Chief Executive, Bebington and West Wirral Primary Care Trust	Wirral Local Strategic Partnership nominee
Kieran Gordon	Chief Executive, Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership	Liverpool Partnership Group nominee
Rev. Roger Driver	Health and Social Care Forum	Sefton borough Partnership nominee
Diane Walton	Assistant Director of Investment (Field)	Housing Corporation, Northern Region
Paul Spooner	Regional Director	English Partnerships
Jenny Charteris	Private sector	CPCR
Kelvin Hughes	Private sector	Cheshire Building Society
Vacant	Private sector	Being recruited

Local Government Funding (Hampshire)

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, when a grant will be allocated to Hampshire County Council on the basis of the 2001 population census; and if he will make a statement. [200232]

Mr. Raynsford: The mid-year population estimates, based on the 2001 population census, have been used in the distribution of Revenue Support Grant since 2003–04. The Local Government Finance Report (England) 2003–2004 was approved by the House on 5 February 2003.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) revised the mid-2001 population estimates on 9 September 2004. I announced the start of consultation on the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2005–2006:

Amending Report 2005 on 18 November 2004. The Amending Report incorporates the changes to the population data.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what mechanism will be used to introduce the changes to retirement ages for members of the Local Government Pension Scheme; and if he will make a statement. [200499]

Phil Hope: Amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme are made under powers in the Superannuation Act 1972, by Statutory Instrument subject to negative resolution procedure.

New Deal (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, how much money from the New Deal for Communities programme has been spent in the London Borough of Wandsworth. [199671]

Keith Hill: None. There are 10 New Deal for Communities partnerships in London, but none are in the London Borough of Wandsworth.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199642]

Phil Hope: None.

Part P Registration

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of contractors who will have registered as a Part P Competent Person by 1 January 2005. [199932]

Phil Hope: The operators report a steadily rising number of applications being received. More accurate details of Part P Competent Persons should be available in the new year when further progress has been made by scheme operators.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what information he has received concerning the availability of courses to enable contractors to qualify for Part P registration. [199933]

Phil Hope: Technical colleges throughout England and Wales are offering the relevant courses although many wishing to register with a Part P competent person scheme will already possess the required qualifications and will not need to attend a training course.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what his estimate is of the total cost to the contractor of Part P registration. [199934]

Phil Hope: The registration fees for Part P competent person schemes range from £300 to £800, depending on which scheme a contractor applies to join. There may be additional costs for electrical testing equipment or for training to acquire the necessary qualifications where a contractor does not already possess these.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what provision his Department has made to increase the number of local authority inspectors to facilitate the enforcement of Part P registration; and if he will make a statement. [199935]

Phil Hope: Local authorities are not responsible for the registration of persons on Part P competent person schemes; this is done by the operators of such schemes.

Right to Buy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to extend the right to buy to more housing associations' tenants. [200291]

Keith Hill: Over 50 per cent. of housing association tenants already have the right to purchase their rented home through the right to buy and right to acquire schemes. The Government have no plans to extend the right to buy to more housing association tenants.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is exploring the option of offering an equity loan to social tenants, including those who do not currently have a right to buy or acquire their home, in order to meet their home ownership aspirations. This follows a recommendation of both the Home Ownership Task Force and the Barker review.

Street Properties (Battersea)

Martin Linton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what the outcome was of the discussions that he and the Housing Corporation have had with the Peabody Trust concerning the proposed sale of street properties in Battersea. [199837]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation is continuing to have discussions with the Peabody Trust regarding its progress against its plan to achieve the Decent Homes Standard. The Trust's plans are underpinned by a financial strategy, which includes the sale of some older properties to fund the improvement programme. This includes selected properties in Battersea, which the Trust is considering for disposal. The Trust will ensure that the interests of residents are protected when considering these plans.

Transport Infrastructure Fund

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the *(a)* type and *(b)* location of projects to be funded from the transport infrastructure fund he announced in his oral statement of 13 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258. [200038]

Keith Hill: The Community Infrastructure Fund was announced in July 2004 as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. It comprises £50 million in 2006–07 and £150 million in 2007–08. It is designed to support the transport infrastructure costs required to enable faster housing development in the four Sustainable Communities Plan growth areas—Milton Keynes South Midlands; Thames Gateway; London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough; and Ashford.

Guidance on the operation of the Fund was published on 19 November 2004. £34 million has been allocated to two bus schemes in the Thames Gateway—the East

London and Greenwich Waterfront transits. No decisions have yet been taken on the allocation of the remainder of the money. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Transport will be working closely with local and regional partners to agree priorities for funding. Initial funding for successful schemes will be made available from April 2006.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support Agency

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will ensure that the Child Support Agency informs the parent with care of all financial decisions regarding the non-resident parent; and if he will make a statement. [199415]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. John Taylor, dated 29 November 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will ensure that the Child Support Agency informs the parent with care of all financial decisions regarding the non resident parent; and if he will make a statement.

The Agency's ability to share information is governed by Regulation 9A of The Child Support (Information, Evidence and Disclosure) Regulations 1992. Within that constraint the Agency will inform the parent with care of all relevant financial decisions regarding the non-resident parent.

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria are used to decide whether a Child Support Agency client is to be assessed under the new or old system; and what arrangements are in place for moving cases between the two systems. [200317]

Mr. Pond: In general, new applications which take effect on or after 3 March 2003 are dealt with under the new arrangements. However if a new application is made within 13 weeks of the closure of an old scheme case, it may fall to be dealt with under the old arrangements.

Old scheme cases remain subject to the old rules. However some cases are converted early if they are linked to a new application. The circumstances in which this happens are prescribed in legislation. They include, for example, cases where a non-resident parent who already has an old scheme assessment is also the non-resident parent in relation to a new scheme application.

We will make a decision on the transfer of old scheme cases once we are sure that the new arrangements are working well and its IT is robust.

Contracted-out Rebates

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his estimate of expenditure on contracted-out rebates is based on an assumption about the number of people who are contracted out in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [200158]

Malcolm Wicks: Current estimates of expenditure on contracted out rebates in 2004–05 are based on assumptions of the number of people contracted out in 2004–05, as well as incorporating other data and assumptions-for example, the earnings of people contracted-out and the level of rebates paid in the past.

Assumptions of the number of people contracted out in 2004–05 are in turn based on the latest available data on the numbers of people contracted out but taking account of information on trends in contracting out since the latest data.

The latest available data on the number of people contracted out was published in March this year and shows numbers contracted-out up to 2000–01. Further data showing numbers contracted out up to 2002–03 is expected to be published by the end of this year and the assumptions underlying the estimate of rebate expenditure will be reviewed in light of this new data.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the costs of the Financial Assistance Scheme will be met from within his Department's pre-existing spending plans. [199725]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have promised to make £400 million in total available for the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS). It is proposed to accommodate expenditure on FAS in the period from 2005–06 to 2007–08 within the spending plans settled in the 2004 Spending Review. For later years, the Government will take account of their commitment to the FAS in future spending reviews.

Household Income

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of households in each region of England and Wales has a gross annual income of *(a)* less than £10,000 and *(b)* less than £20,000. [199902]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table:

Percentage of households in each region of England and Wales with gross annual income less than £10,000 and £20,000 at 2002–03 prices. Average for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03

	Gross household income less than £10,000	*Gross household income less than £20,000*
North East	27	58
North West	22	53
Yorkshire and Humberside	22	53
East Midlands	22	51
West Midlands	20	49
Eastern	17	41
London	19	42
South East	15	38
South West	20	48
Wales	24	56

Notes:

1. All figures are estimates and are taken from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). Due to regional volatility, estimates are based on a three year average from 2000–01 to 2002–03.

2. Figures are based on a total income at 2002–03 prices.

3. The FRS is not designed to collect information on annual income. Earnings figures are based on last usual pay. Annual income is estimated by assuming that the income for the relevant period applied for the whole year.
4. The estimates are based on sample counts that have been adjusted for non-response using multi-purpose grossing factors which align the FRS to Government Office Region populations by age and sex. Estimates are subject to sampling error and remaining response bias.
5. Total weekly household income consists of gross income from all sources before deduction of income tax and national insurance.
6. Total income has not been adjusted for family size.
Source:
2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 Family Resources Survey, Great Britain

Pension Credit

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average payment of pension credit is in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* each region. [200373]

Malcolm Wicks: Average pension credit awards in Great Britain, England and Wales and in each Government Office Region in Great Britain at 30 September are given in the following table. Information on numbers of pension credit recipients will now be reported on a quarterly basis, in line with reporting practices for other Departmental benefits.

Average pension credit awards—30 September 2004

Area	*Average award (£)*
Great Britain	41.67
England and Wales	41.83
Eastern	39.14
East Midlands	39.48
London	57.77
North East	37.12
North West	41.42
Scotland	40.29
South East	38.56
South West	38.62
Wales	41.82
West Midlands	41.73
Yorkshire and Humberside	38.15

Working Time (Home Deliveries/Services)

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department collects statistics on the amount of working time lost by employees waiting at home for delivery of *(a)* goods and *(b)* services. [200152]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not collect statistics for this purpose as employees required to wait at home for delivery of goods and services utilise the provisions of the flexible working hours agreement or their annual leave allocation, thereby not incurring any lost working time.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 30 November 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Exmoor National Park

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make an assessment of the economic impact of the Single Farm Payment on the Exmoor National Park area. [199817]

Alun Michael: An assessment of the economic impact of the Single Payment Scheme in England has been placed in the House of Commons' Library (and is available on the Defra website). Data are not available to enable an assessment to be made specifically of impacts within the National Park, but the report contains analysis relating to cattle and sheep farms in the Less Favoured Areas, which is the predominant farm type in National Parks.

Hunting

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many foxes were killed during hunts in each of the last five years. [199780]

Alun Michael: The Department does not maintain records of the numbers of foxes killed by hunting each year. However, Lord Burns' report estimates that between 21,000 and 25,000 foxes are killed by hunts each year, which accounts for around 6 per cent. of all fox deaths.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when *(a)* she and *(b)* Ministers in her Department last met representatives of the League Against Cruel Sports; and if she will make a statement. [199637]

Alun Michael: Ministers meet a wide range of people in the course of their day-to-day business. The last meeting between a Defra Minister and representatives of the League Against Cruel Sports took place in August.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary Session her Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the Session. [199647]

Alun Michael: Four of the 4,883 parliamentary questions tabled by MPs in the last Session did not receive a substantive answer before the end of the Session.

Set-aside Rules

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will publish the details of the new set-aside rules. [200320]

Alun Michael: We have already published many of the rules concerning set-aside that will apply under the Single Payment Scheme in 2005, including details about which farmers will have to set land aside under the new scheme, how these farmers should calculate the area of land they will need to set aside, and how set-aside entitlements must be used. Guidance about the management rules for set-aside, which will be very similar to the corresponding rules which formerly applied under the Arable Area Payments Scheme, will be published shortly.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Correspondence

Joyce Quin: To ask the Solicitor-General when she will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Gateshead, East and Washington, West dated 4 February. [200590]

The Solicitor-General: A reply was sent on 5 April 2004. A duplicate copy of that letter has been sent to my hon. Friend on Monday 29 November 2004.

Ministerial Meetings

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Solicitor-General what discussions the Attorney-General held with John Bellinger, senior associate counsel to President Bush and legal adviser to the National Security Council, during his visit to Washington in February 2003. [199763]

The Solicitor-General: As made clear in paragraph 377 of the Report of the Butler Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction, in order to assist in reaching a concluded view on the proper interpretation of resolution 1441, in February 2003 the Attorney-General met members of the US Administration who, as co-sponsors of the resolution had detailed knowledge of its negotiation. These were confidential Government to Government discussions and their content is covered by legal professional privilege. The detail of the discussion is therefore exempt from disclosure under both paragraphs 1 and 4*(d)* of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Carrier Bags

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much it has cost to produce carrier bags branded with ODPM since 1997. [200631]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. Since then the Office has spent £790.00 on the production of 5,000 branded carrier bags at a cost of about 16p per bag.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199626]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's main website (www.odpm.gov.uk) and the info4local.gov.uk site follow the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content (W3C) Accessibility Guidelines Priority 2 Checkpoints.

Greywater Recycling Systems

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures his Department is taking to encourage the installation of domestic greywater recycling systems in *(a)* new and *(b)* existing properties. [199430]

Phil Hope: Water conservation, including the use of recycled water, is being considered in the current review of Part G, Hygiene, of the Building Regulations. This will provide guidance on how recycled water can be used in new buildings.

The use of recycled water in existing buildings is being appraised in integrated water management plans for growth areas including the Thames Gateway.

High Hedges

Mr. Beith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will issue guidance to local authorities in respect of provisions to address problems with high hedges contained in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. [199903]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to issue guidance for local authorities at the same time as Regulations to bring Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 into force are laid before Parliament. We expect the complaints system to be fully operational early in 2005.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Electoral Registration

Mr. Evans: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what representations the Electoral Commission is making to companies to encourage workers who live abroad to register to vote in British elections. [200086]

Mr. Viggers: I am advised by the Electoral Commission that it is making no such representations.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Fixed Penalty Notices

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for firework abuse since 14 September. [199712]

Ms Blears: The latest provisional data shows that, between 1 October 2003 and 31 October 2004, 302 penalty notices for disorder have been issued by police forces in England and Wales for the offence of throwing fireworks. A further 10 penalty notices have been issued thus far for offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004, which were implemented on 11 October 2004.

Police

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will end the funding rule which results in police authorities facing financial penalties if they fail to maintain officer numbers. [199779]

Ms Blears: The number of police officers in England and Wales reached a new record of 139,728 on 31 August 2004 and we are committed to maintaining these record numbers.

The major component in the rise in police numbers since March 2000 has been the use of the Crime Fighting Fund. The Fund has supported forces' recruitment of more than 9,500 officers additional to those which forces were already planning to appoint.

The Home Office will continue to provide funding for these additional posts on condition that the uplift achieved since 2000 is maintained.

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will make an announcement on the Police Grant Settlement. [200318]

Ms Blears: I shall announce details of the provisional police grant settlement for 2005–06 on 2 December.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the future of the police training centre at Bruche, Warrington; [200194]

(2) what discussions he has had on the future of the police training centre at Bruche; when these discussions took place; and who was involved in them. [200197]

Ms Blears: The police training centre at Bruche, Warrington, is run by Centrex, the national police training provider. It is currently used to provide the residential Stage 2 of Foundation Training to probationary officers.

We are currently working on the modernisation of probationer training. Under this, probationers will no longer automatically be sent for residential training at Centrex regional training centres, and the role of Centrex will change, with a greater focus on design, quality assurance and evaluation of training, rather than delivery.

Taking forward this work has involved extensive discussions between the Home Office and key stakeholders, in particular representatives of the Association of Police Authorities, the Association of Chief Police Officers and Centrex. The Home Office has been represented in these discussions by officials. The discussions have been taking place through most of this year, in particular over the summer, and are still on-going.The modernisation of probationer training will

necessarily have implications for the future of Centrex's estate, including the training centre at Bruche. We are still working with Centrex on the details of these.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of policing incidents arising from excessive alcohol consumption was in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [199612]

Ms Blears: Police authority accounts are not kept in a form which would make it possible to identify the costs of policing related to alcohol related disorder, and there is no specific grant made available to forces to deal directly with the problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption. It is for individual police forces to decide how they allocate their resources to tackle their crime and disorder priorities.

The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England, published on 15 March 2004 estimates that alcohol related crime and disorder costs taxpayers up to £7.3 billion a year.

DEFENCE

Battalion Regiments

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the future new regiments of three battalions will be broken down into heavy, medium and light battalions. [200018]

Mr. Ingram: Each battalion within the new infantry structure will be allocated one of four roles: armoured, mechanised, light or air assault.

Future Surface Combatant Vessels

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost to public funds has been to date of the Future Surface Combatant assessment studies, broken down by *(a)* the Triton Trimaran project, *(b)* the integrated project team and *(c)* other costs. [199531]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* At outturn prices, the total estimated cost of the Future Surface Combatant studies from inception to date is £17 million. This figure is comprised of £6.2 million for Trimaran trials, £5.7 million for the Defence Procurement Agency's project team costs and £5.1 million for additional concept studies.

Royal Navy

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many standing tasks the Royal Navy Fleet fulfills; and what assessment he has made of the number of standing tasks to be fulfilled by the Royal Navy in 2008 following the implementation of the decision to reduce the number of frigates and destroyers. [199567]

Mr. Ingram: Royal Navy frigates and destroyers currently undertake six standing tasks where forces are permanently committed to the task. We are currently developing an effects based approach to programming which is likely to reduce the number of standing tasks before 2008.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Care (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average cost is of providing a child care place in the London borough of Wandsworth. [199673]

Margaret Hodge: Data at local authority level on the cost of providing child care places are not collected centrally by the Department.

Education (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the grants his Department has made for education provision in the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years. [199672]

Mr. Miliband: The following revenue and capital grants for each year from 2002–03 have been provided by the Department:

2002–03

Revenue

Nursery Education Grant

Class Size Grant

Teachers' Pay Grants

School Standards Grant

Learning and Skills Council

Standards Funds

Excellence in Cities

Capital

Basic LEA co-ordinated voluntary aided programme

Condition

Devolved Formula

Modernisation Voluntary Aided

School Security

Seed Challenge

Staff Workspaces

Voluntary Aided School Grant

2003–04

Revenue

Teachers' Pay Grants

School Standards Grant

Learning and Skills Council

Standards Funds

Excellence in Cities

London Budget Support Grant

Capital

Basic LEA co-ordinated voluntary aided programme

Condition

Devolved Formula

Modernisation Voluntary Aided

Seed Challenge

Staff Workspaces

2004–05

Revenue

Teachers' Pay Grants

School Standards Grant

Learning and Skills Council

Standards Funds

Excellence in Cities

Capital

Basic LEA co-ordinated voluntary aided programme

Devolved Formula

Modernisation (Primary)

Modernisation LEA

Seed Challenge

Sustainable Transport

The grants for each year are included in the grant total figures in the following table.

Funding for Wandsworth local education authority

£ million

	EFS/SSA	*Revenue grants*	*Capital grants*
2002–03	103.9	25.7	8.3
2003–04	114.3	29.0	7.0
2004–05	124.1	29.0	6.3

Notes:

1. Price Base: Cash
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education Standard Spending Assessments/Education Formula Spending settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC.
3. Funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. Where responsibility for funding a school has transferred from an LEA, related funding no longer appears in the series.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £0.1 million.
6. Status: 2003–04 and 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Home Start

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria he will use to determine which 10 per cent. of local authorities will not receive funding to provide Home Start in 2006–07, as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 44. [199463]

Margaret Hodge: Home Start schemes are independent, voluntary organisations, established by communities themselves and managed locally. Home Start UK works closely with local schemes, supporting them to deliver a high quality home visiting support to families with at least one child under five years. We have significantly increased our funding for Home Start UK from £874,000 in 2003–04 to £2.46 million this financial year to expand the support it offers to local Home Start schemes and increase the availability of Home Start support. Establishing a new local scheme depends on community initiative and Home Start UK seeks to stimulate interest in those areas without existing established home visiting services.

International Student Assessment Study

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the schools in England that were selected for the sample to be included in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment 2003 study. [200290]

Mr. Miliband: The schools for the sample were selected by the PISA international consortium, led by the Australian Centre for Educational Research, that undertook PISA 2003 on behalf of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Participation was voluntary on the part of schools.

The Department's contractor for PISA 2003, the Office for National Statistics, was responsible for running the study in England. The Data Protection Act requires ONS to honour any pledge that it makes to respondents before taking part in its surveys. Both the sampled schools and sampled pupils were assured before agreeing to co-operate that their decision to take part and the information they gave would be held in confidence by ONS. Consequently ONS cannot release the names of participating or non-responding schools or pupils.

Key Stage 2 Tests

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 11-year-olds attained Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [199916]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Qualifications

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reasons a GNVQ pass is counted as four GCSE passes in reporting school performance. [200442]

Mr. Miliband: The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) decide on the equivalence of qualifications. In reaching these decisions they look rigorously at the level of difficulty, the content and size of the qualification. The QCA has established that 6-unit GNVQs are the equivalent of four GCSE passes. It is on this basis, these achievements are included in the School Achievement and Attainment Tables.

Sure Start

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on progress of the West Hendon Sure Start scheme. [199487]

Margaret Hodge: Sure Start Underhill and West Hendon, a sixth wave local programme has been offering services to under fours and their families since 2003, so it is in its second year. Compared with other similar programmes it is making reasonable progress and was held to be low risk in its latest risk assessment.

The figure for the number of children 'reached' for Underhill and West Hendon at September 2004, was 12 per cent. This is slightly lower than the average for fifth and sixth wave programmes in London (20 per cent.) and national average for fifth and sixth wave programmes (15 per cent.). However, when looking at the percentage

of new children seen, the local programme's results for September 2004 are clearly higher than the average for London and nationally.

Percentage

September 2004	*Reach*	*New children seen*
Underhill and West Hendon	12	26
London Rounds 5 and 6 average	20	21
National Rounds 5 and 6 average	15	18

Sure Start Underhill and West Hendon will form part of a purpose built children's centre on the site of Parkfield School in West Hendon, to be opened by March 2006. The programme is receiving special support from the Atkins Help Squad, who provide expert advice on capital projects, to ensure the deadline is met.

Teachers (Dismissal/Retirement)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures have been introduced since 1997 to enable incompetent teachers to be dismissed by their employer; and how many teachers have been subject to those measures. [200648]

Mr. Miliband: As a manifesto pledge, action was taken following the 1997 general election to agree new procedures for dealing speedily and fairly with teachers who cannot do the job. A new outline procedure was agreed at a national level among representatives of teacher employers, teacher unions and associations, and other interested parties. Building on this a statutory duty was introduced for all maintained schools to establish procedures for dealing with teacher capability problems, and the Government issued guidance for schools and LEAs in July 2000. We do not collect records centrally on the number of teachers who undergo capability procedures; they would be an unnecessary burden on schools and LEAs.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of teachers retired at age 60 in each of the last five years; and what percentage took early retirement in each year. [199731]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the numbers and percentages of teachers leaving service from maintained sector schools in England who have retired on age grounds at aged 60 or over, prematurely, with actuarially reduced benefit (ARB) or on ill health grounds in each of the last five years.

	1999-2000	*2000-01*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*
Age	2,260	2,300	2,350	2,640	2,950
Percentage	32	29	30	32	32
Premature	2,650	2,620	1,980	1,720	1,840
Percentage	38	33	25	21	20
ARB	—	510	1,380	1,980	2,620
Percentage	—	6	17	24	29
Ill health	2,130	2,450	2,220	1,860	1,700
Percentage	30	31	28	23	19

1. Actuarially reduced benefits were introduced in April 2000.
2. The percentages are calculated from the total number retiring from the maintained school sector during the year.

Source:
Database of Teacher Records and Pensioner Statistical System (PENSTATS)

Teachers' Pensions

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions his Department has had with the teaching unions regarding teachers' pensions. [199729]

Mr. Miliband: Many aspects of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) have been examined recently by the Teachers' Pensions Review Group (TPRG). The teacher unions from England and Wales represented at the TPRG include the National Union of Teachers, National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, National Association of Schoolmasters/ Union of Women Teachers, Secondary Heads Association, National Association of Head Teachers and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

Regular meetings of this group have been held since November 2003 and will continue throughout the review of the TPS.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the effects of proposed changes to teachers' pensions on recruitment and retention of teachers. [199730]

Mr. Miliband: The review of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is an opportunity for modernisation in a way that scheme members will value and also secures the long term affordability of the scheme. We have therefore embarked upon a major consultation with interested parties, including individual teachers, to give them an opportunity to comment on range of issues related to the future of the TPS.

In particular, we are looking at ways of increasing the flexibilities available to teachers over the way in which they plan for their retirement because the more attractive and flexible the TPS is as a benefit to the membership, the greater the contribution it will make to recruitment and retention.

The consultation document can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what ill-health retirement benefits are available to teachers under their pension scheme; and what changes are proposed to those benefits. [199732]

Mr. Miliband: The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) provides for early payment of retirement benefits, comprising annual pension and retirement lump sum, to teachers who become permanently incapacitated. These benefits are normally enhanced in relation to the teacher's age and the amount of pensionable service accrued in the TPS.

The current consultation on the Review of the TPS seeks views on an alternative approach that recognises the severity of the medical condition and its impact on future earnings capacity. Further details are available on www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations.

TRANSPORT

Barnstaple Bypass

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Barnstaple bypass project was given final approval. [200092]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Final approval for this scheme was announced on 9 November 2004.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199694]

Charlotte Atkins: The main Department for Transport web site at http://www.dft.gov.uk has been designed to comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines at double AA level (Level 2). Following an RNIB audit of the site, RNIB asked for further changes, which we are now implementing. RNIB will be undertaking a further audit in December this year to measure progress.

The Department also maintains a number of .gov.uk web sites. Three of these do not currently fully comply with the guidelines for departmental sites. The specific problems have been identified and actions are being taken to ensure that they will all be compliant with the guidelines as soon as possible.

Level Crossings

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date a red light camera facility to detect crossing infringements was first installed at Beddingham level crossing on the A27; for what reasons it remains inactive; and on what date he expects that it will be operational. [200693]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for Network Rail who will write to the hon. Member.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent to date in connection with the installation of the red light camera facility at the Beddingham level crossing on the A27. [200694]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for Network Rail who will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many manned level crossings are operated by each train operating company. [199418]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail, as the mainline railway infrastructure manager, operates all level crossings on its national network.

Local Transport Authorities

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when local transport authorities will be informed whether bids for funding for projects have been granted. [200095]

Charlotte Atkins: *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Department is currently considering all of the bids for funding under the local transport plan process. The date for decisions for this years settlement has yet to be confirmed, but an announcement will be made in December.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date each local transport authority was informed about the postponement of decisions on each local transport project. [200096]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Decisions on the individual schemes that will comprise this years local transport plan settlement have yet to be made. However, arrangements are in place to ensure that local authorities are informed of decisions as soon as possible after the statement to Parliament.

Local Transport Plans (South West Region)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the South West Regional Development Agency on the *(a)* financial and *(b)* engineering viability of the local transport plan in each local transport authority in the South West Region. [200199]

Charlotte Atkins: None. It is for a local authority promoting a local transport scheme to ensure its proposal is supported by a robust appraisal case, and for them to discuss any relevant issues with regional stakeholders. The Department would consider the appraisal case carefully, as part of the decision making process.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many proposals for final approval from each local transport authority in the South West region have been put on hold. [200200]

Charlotte Atkins: The final decision on the schemes that will comprise this years local transport plan settlement, which to postpone and those that should not be taken forward has yet to be made. The Department is currently considering the relative merits of the proposals received in all of regions and an announcement will be made shortly.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many requests for immediate approval he has received from Somerset county council in relation to the North West Taunton Package; and what discussions he has had with the council on the likely impact of delays in approval. [200203]

Charlotte Atkins: Since September my officials have been in discussion with Somerset on the final appraisal of the North West Taunton Package following the approval of the Compulsory Purchase Order for the scheme. As part of these discussions the council have expressed their views on the timing of the scheme to officials in both the DfT and the Government Office. In addition the Department has received a letter from Councillor Carroll and an email from the Leader of the Council, both dated 8 November, which set out Somerset's position in relation to the scheme.

Loran C Navigational System

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether it is the intention of the Government to continue their programme of investment in the Loran C navigational system. [200460]

Mr. Jamieson: The General Lighthouse Authorities are planning to operate an experimental Loran C signal from a site near Rugby for a 2-year period, starting early in 2005. Decisions on possible future investment in Loran C will be made in the light of the experience gained and on international developments in the use of this system.

Ministerial Visits

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Ministers from his Department have visited the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last five years; and what the purpose was of each visit. [199666]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed on 29 May 2002. Since that date no Ministers from the Department have undertaken a departmental visit to Wandsworth.

Train Services (Hereford)

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what discussions he has had with the First Great Western and Thames Trains about possible reductions to the direct service from Hereford to Paddington; [200485]

(2) what representations he has received about the direct rail service from Hereford to London. [200486]

Mr. McNulty: None.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what regulations are in place to preserve the frequency of direct trains from Hereford to London; and if he will make a statement. [200487]

Mr. McNulty: Train operating companies must provide a minimum level of service as prescribed by their franchise agreements. Services beyond these minimum levels are provided at operators' discretion on a commercial basis. Under its franchise with the Strategic Rail Authority First Great Western is contractually required to provide one service per day in each direction between Hereford and London to arrive in London by 1000 and depart no earlier than 1700. There is no contractual requirement for First Great Western Link (previously Thames Trains) to run services between Hereford and London.

Unadopted Roads

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many unadopted roads there are in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Pendle. [199929]

Charlotte Atkins: This information is not held centrally.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Commercial Radio Licences

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions Ofcom has held regarding Jazz FM's radio licence requirements; and if she will make a statement. [199519]

Estelle Morris: The matter raised is the responsibility of Ofcom as independent regulator. DCMS officials have asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the criteria by which Ofcom assesses applications for changes to commercial radio licences; and if she will make a statement. [199520]

Estelle Morris: The criteria are set out in Section 106 of the Broadcasting Act 1990, as amended by Section 312 (3) of the Communications Act 2003, which states:

Conditions included in a licence for the purposes of subsection (1) may provide that Ofcom may consent to a departure from the character of the licensed service if, and only if, they are satisfied:

(a) that the departure would not substantially alter the character of the service;

(b) that the departure would not narrow the range of programmes available by way of relevant independent radio services to persons living in the area or locality for which the service is licensed to be provided;

(c) that, in the case of a local licence, the departure would be conducive to the maintenance or promotion of fair and effective competition in that area or locality; or

(d) that, in the case of a local licence, there is evidence that, amongst persons living in that area or locality, there is a significant demand for, or significant support for, the change that would result from the departure.

The matters to which Ofcom must have regard in determining for the purposes of this section the character of a service provided under a local licence include, in particular, the selection of spoken material and music in programmes included in the service.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the *(a)* name and *(b)* marketing of a commercial radio station is taken into consideration when commercial radio licence bids are considered. [199521]

Estelle Morris: The matter raised is the responsibility of Ofcom as independent regulator. DCMS officials have asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter to her dated 6 October from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to John Paton. [200315]

Estelle Morris: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 26 October 2004.

Sustainable Timber

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the refurbishment projects within her Department that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment comes from legal and sustainable sources. [200438]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS has no refurbishment works in progress or planned for the next 12 months. When any such work is undertaken contracts will state the need for certification of timber being used.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [200439]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 29 April 2004, *Official Report*, column 1179W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms Walley).

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fisheries Conservancy Board

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions a Fisheries Conservancy Board vessel under the control of the *(a)* Chief and *(b)* Deputy Chief Executive has been returned damaged in each of the last three years; and what the total cost of repair was on each occasion. [199887]

Angela Smith: A Fisheries Conservancy Board vessel under the control of the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive was returned damaged on one occasion. The total cost of repair was £17,981.96 plus VAT.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions, after carrying out patrols in a Fisheries Conservancy Board vessel unassisted by other FCB staff, the *(a)* Chief and *(b)* Deputy Chief Executive required overnight accommodation charged to the FCB in each of the last three years. [199890]

Angela Smith: None.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199650]

Mr. Paul Murphy: At all times, the Northern Ireland Office will make every effort to answer questions substantively before Prorogation. However, this is not always possible. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response, it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

The hon. Member will be aware of the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons on 21 July concerning "will write" responses. In accordance with that statement, my ministerial colleagues and I answered that 'it had not proved possible to provide a substantive reply' to 15 parliamentary questions.

Waste (Illegal Dumping)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what tonnage of waste is estimated to have been dumped illegally in Northern Ireland since November 2003. [200079]

Angela Smith: Although no figures are available for the total volume of illegal waste dumped in Northern Ireland during this period, Environment and Heritage Service estimates that approximately 250,000 tonnes of waste, originating in the Republic of Ireland, have been deposited in illegal sites in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is being done with the waste illegally dumped in Northern Ireland over the past 12 months. [200080]

Angela Smith: Where large-scale illegal deposits of waste have been discovered, cases are being pursued through the Courts against landowners and operators of illegal sites. We are seeking Court decisions that will result in the remediation of sites. Discussions are also continuing with the relevant enforcement authorities in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) with regard to the repatriation of ROI waste illegally deposited in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made in apprehending those responsible for illegal dumping of waste originating in the Irish Republic in Northern Ireland. [200085]

Angela Smith: EHS has investigated a number of instances where waste originating from the Republic of Ireland has been illegally deposited in Northern Ireland. A number of such cases have been referred to the Public Prosecution Service. To date, no case that has a direct link to waste originating in ROI has been heard. EHS continues to work with the relevant enforcement authorities in ROI to improve the control of waste movements and detect illegal activity.

Worktrack

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent in each year since 2000 on the Worktrack programme in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland. [200902]

Mr. Gardiner: The information is as follows.

£ million

	(a) Expenditure in North Belfast	(b) Total Expenditure in Northern Ireland
1999–2000	0.15	2.486
2000–01	0.78	6.751
2001–02	0.62	8.227
2002–03	0.95	9.156
2003–04	1.14	9.685

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been placed on the Worktrack programme in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland in each year since 2000. [200903]

Mr. Gardiner: The information is as follows.

	Number of starts in:	
	North Belfast	Northern Ireland
1999–2000	43	691
2000–01	203	1,768
2001–02	141	1,880
2002–03	233	2,257
2003–04	255	1,205

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Accounting (EU)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the quality of accounting practices in the EU institutions. [199806]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not discussed this matter with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

British Overseas Territories

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether citizens of British Overseas Territories will be able to vote in the referendum on the EU constitution. [199799]

Mr. MacShane: The Gracious Speech on 23 November announced that a Bill will be introduced to give effect to the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union, subject to a referendum. The Bill will provide for the holding of the referendum including the franchise. It would not be appropriate to comment on the exact nature of those provisions until a Bill is published. I can confirm however that it is our intention to include the people of Gibraltar in the franchise for the referendum.

Cricket Tour (Zimbabwe)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice he has given to the England and Wales Cricket Board on the Zimbabwe Government's decision to ban journalists covering the England cricket tour from entering the country. [200362]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Officials in London and our embassy in Harare have been in close touch with the England and Wales Cricket Board throughout this period.

On news of the banning of several UK journalists accompanying the England team, my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. MacShane) summoned the Zimbabwean Chargé d' Affairs on 24 November, to convey our strong concern about this attack on press freedom.

The Zimbabwean authorities have now decided to accredit the UK journalists. We remain greatly concerned at the broader restrictions on a free media in Zimbabwe.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is his Department's policy that all British citizens living overseas should be able to vote in a referendum on the Constitution. [199802]

Mr. MacShane: A Bill providing for the holding of the referendum is still to be published. However, in general terms a UK citizen who, when resident in the UK, was registered to vote and who then takes up residence abroad is entitled to apply to the electoral registration officer for the area in which they were most recently registered in the UK, in order to be placed on the "overseas electors' list". Entitlement to be included on the overseas electors' list is limited to a period of 15 years from the time that the applicant was last included on a UK electoral register and entitles them to vote in elections in the UK. Those on the overseas electors list would likewise be entitled to vote in a referendum if its franchise were the same as a Parliamentary election in the UK.

Europe Day

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals his Department has to celebrate Europe Day on 9 May 2005; and what budget he has set aside for this purpose. [199803]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not yet finalised its plans for Europe Day-celebrations. No specific budget has been set aside for such celebrations.

Sudan

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to press for a peace agreement to resolve the conflict affecting Darfur in Sudan. [199721]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* We are actively pressing the Government of Sudan and the rebels to end the fighting in Darfur and reach a political settlement, and building on the Humanitarian and Security Protocols that were signed on 9 November. We are closely involved in the African Union (AU)-mediated peace talks in Abuja, where the UK participates as an observer. We are working alongside the AU to enhance the AU observer mission in Darfur. And we are

continuing to play a leading role in the UN Security Council in maximising the pressure on the parties. Security Council Resolution 1574 reaffirms the readiness of the international community to apply sanctions on the Sudanese parties if they fail to fulfil their commitments.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how much money his Department *(a)* has given since 1 January and *(b)* intends to give to the African Union to fund its forces in Darfur; and if he will make a statement; [199722]

(2) whether it is the Government's policy to give additional financial support to the African Union for the cost of administering its force in Darfur. [199723]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The UK is providing significant financial support to the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur, through the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool, which is a joint DFID/FCO/MOD fund.

In May the UK contributed £2 million to help jump-start the AU mission in Darfur. In August, we helped to pay for the airlift of 150 Nigerian troops into Darfur and provided rations packs at a total cost of approximately £220,000. On 7 October my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced a further contribution of £12 million to support the expanded AU mission. It is for the AU to decide exactly how they allocate this money; we are in close touch with them on this.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information his Department has received regarding the likely date by which a peace agreement to resolve the conflict affecting Darfur in Sudan might be signed. [199724]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The next round of the African Union-mediated peace talks being held in Abuja is due to begin on 10 December. We will continue to urge the parties to engage seriously and in good faith to reach a political solution to the crisis in Darfur as soon as possible.

We welcome the commitment to the Security Council in Nairobi by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement to conclude a comprehensive peace agreement by 31 December. The implementation of this agreement should have a positive impact on the situation in Darfur.

CABINET OFFICE

Duchy of Lancaster

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether an estimate exists of the overall cost within the current budget of her Department of the overall cost of creating a separate Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. [201047]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave him on 10 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 769W.

Housing Policy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what role he plays in the development of housing policy. [200139]

Mr. Milburn: As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I have a cross Government role in the co-ordination of Government Policy.

Ministerial Responsibilities

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what Ministerial responsibility he has for *(a)* crime, *(b)* jobs, *(c)* health, *(d)* education, *(e)* child care and *(f)* pensions. [200987]

Mr. Milburn: As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I have a cross Government role in the co-ordination of Government Policy.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Asbestos-related Benefits

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom are in receipt of industrial injuries benefit in relation to exposure of asbestos dust; [200208]

(2) how many people in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom have been diagnosed with pleural plaques due to exposure to asbestos dust; [200211]

(3) show many people in Midlothian have received industrial injuries benefit in the last 10 years due to mesothelioma caused by asbestos dust; [200212]

(4) show many people in Midlothian are in receipt of industrial injuries benefit due to asbestosis. [200213]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Information is not available in the form requested. The available information is in the table.

Number of people in receipt of industrial injuries benefit for prescribed diseases D1, D3, D8 and D9 as at March 2002

Prescribed Disease	*Great Britain*	*Scotland*
D1	11,000	1,100
D3	800	—
D8	*100	—
D9	2,400	*200

Notes:

1. Figures are from a 10 per cent. sample. Figures marked * are subject to a high degree of sampling error and should only be used as a guide to the correct situation. Figures are not available at constituency level.
2. — denotes nil or negligible.
3. Industrial injuries disablement benefit is currently payable for four prescribed diseases to people whose jobs involved working with asbestos or being exposed to asbestos after 4 July 1948. These are: D1-Pneumoconiosis, D3-Diffuse mesothelioma, D8-Primary carcinoma of the lung with accompanying evidence of one or both (A) asbestos (B) unilateral or bilateral diffuse pleural thickening and D9-Unilateral or bilateral diffuse pleural thickening.
4. D1 relates to all Pneumoconiosis cases only some of which (an unknown proportion) are asbestos related. Prescribed diseases D3, D8 and D9 are all asbestos related.
5. Pleural plaques is not a prescribed disease for industrial injuries disablement benefit.

Benefit Processing

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what assessment he has made of the suitability of Inverness as a site for benefit processing; and if he will make a statement; [200982]

(2) when he will make a decision on the location of the six benefit processing centres in Scotland. [200983]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. David Stewart, dated 30 November 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the suitability of Inverness as a site for benefit processing and when a decision will be made on the location of the benefit processing centres in Scotland. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

You will recall that the Secretary of State, Alan Johnson, announced in September that(subject to detailed planning(benefit processing will in future be carried out in 8 sites in Scotland. The locations chosen are: Inverness, Coatbridge, Kilmarnock, Glasgow, Springburn, Bathgate, Clydebank and Greenock. Further detailed planning and design work is continuing in these sites, and I expect to be in a position to confirm these choices early in the New Year.

I can confirm that, following appraisals undertaken by our Project Team, the social security office in Inverness appears suitable for conversion to a processing centre and remains part of our current plans for benefit processing in Scotland.

I hope this is helpful.

Carers

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to continue carer's allowance payments to those entitled upon their take-up of state pension; and if he will make a statement. [200328]

Maria Eagle: No. It is a basic principle of the social security system that only one benefit at a time can be paid for the same purpose. Even though the circumstances which give rise to entitlement to carer's allowance and state pension are different, they are both designed to provide a degree of replacement for lost or foregone income. Carer's allowance replaces income where the carer is over working age or has to give up the chance of working to look after a severely disabled person, while state pension replaces income in retirement.

Carer's allowance is therefore not payable, or not payable in full, in addition to state pension. As the contributory benefit, the payment of state pension takes precedence, either extinguishing or reducing the payment of carer's allowance. Nevertheless, the income of a person in these circumstances will be at least as high as the rate of carer's allowance, and is usually higher. In addition, where the benefit cannot be paid, the person will keep underlying entitlement to carer's allowance, which gives them access to the carer premium in housing benefit and council tax benefit and the additional amount for carers in state pension credit.

We have no immediate plans to change these arrangements.

Departmental Web Content

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199686]

Jane Kennedy: We test all of our departmental websites against the minimum level of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines as outlined in the Government Guidelines for UK Websites. Several of our sites already meet or exceed these. These are:

www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

www.childsupportagency.gov.uk

www.disability.gov.uk

www.europeansocialfund.gov.uk.

www.emetaskforce.gov.uk

The first three of these have also achieved the RNIB "See It Right" accreditation.

Where we have identified websites that do not yet meet the minimum standard, we are working towards achieving them as part of existing redevelopment plans. Sites being worked on currently include:

www.dwp.gov.uk

www.worktrain.gov.uk

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.

Our aim is to exceed the minimum prescribed 'Level A' standard wherever possible, achieving "Level AA" or better.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average weekly payment of income support was to recipients of incapacity benefit credits only in each year since 1997. [200660]

Mr. Chris Pond: The information is in the table.

Average weekly payment of income support for working-age claimants receiving both income support and incapacity benefit credits-only

May	£
1997	79.70
1998	82.38
1999	84.90
2000	88.43
2001	93.00
2002	94.63
2003	98.10
2004	98.90

Notes:

1. Working age claimants are men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59.
2. Includes income support paid to single people, couples and families.
3. Includes pension credit payments to men aged 60–64.
4. Number is taken from a 5 per cent. sample and is subject to a degree of sampling error.
5. There will also be some incapacity benefit credits-only claimants who do not receive income support. These have not been included in the data.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples.

New Deal for the Disabled

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has for the renewal of contracts from April 2005 with those organisations that are contracted to deliver the New Deal for Disabled People. [199616]

Jane Kennedy: All current New Deal for Disabled People contracts cover the period to March 2006 and, consequently, there are no plans for any renewals from April 2005.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199658]

Maria Eagle: None.

Pensioners (Cold Weather)

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he is taking to reduce the number of winter deaths of pensioners due to cold weather. [199765]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Stephen Hepburn) on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1945–47W.

Social Fund

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Social Fund crisis loan applications were received in Edinburgh Lothians and the borders in each of the last five years; and how many of these applications were successful. [199578]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Crisis Loan applications received and initial awards made in the area covered by Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Jobcentre Plus District

	Applications	*Initial awards*
1999–2000	36,100	27,100
2000–01	39,200	30,900
2001–02	47,600	38,700
2002–03	50,600	41,500
2003–04	48,600	38,000

Notes:

1. Only the numbers of initial awards have been given, information regarding awards subsequently given on review is not included.

2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Source:

DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System

SCOTLAND

Petrol Prices

5. **Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Treasury regarding petrol prices in remote areas in Scotland. [199382]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the Chancellor on a wide range of issues.

Health Provision (Borders)

6. **Mr. Peter Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the First Minister on levels of health provision in border areas. [199383]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend meets the First Minister regularly to discuss a wide range of issues.

Child Support Agency

7. **John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions regarding the operation of the Child Support Agency in Scotland. [199384]

Mr. Darling: I have discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on a range of issues.

Jobcentre Plus (Lanarkshire)

11. **Mr. Roy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from client groups in relation to the Jobcentre Plus roll-out programme in Lanarkshire. [199388]

Mr. Darling: I have not received any representations on the subject of the Jobcentre Plus roll-out programme in Lanarkshire from client groups, but I am fully aware of the concerns my hon. Friend has voiced with regard to the changes in the Job Centre Plus network in Scotland, including those affecting his constituency.

The impact on jobs and services does vary from location to location in Scotland but, overall, the picture and shape of Job Centre Plus business is changing and in some areas the changes are significant. Where closures are being considered DWP have made clear that they wish to pursue different means of delivering services with partner organisations in the locality. These options have been discussed with MPs and other interested parties.

Carer's Benefit

12. **Ann McKechin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the numbers of people in Scotland claiming carer's benefit. [199389]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has discussions with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on a range of issues. There are 41,695 people in Scotland receiving carer's allowance.

Scottish Regiments

13. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence since 26 October regarding the future of Scottish Infantry Regiments. [199390]

Mr. Darling: My right hon. Friend and I have had recent discussions on a range of issues including the future of the Scottish infantry regiments.

14. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence in the last month on the future of the Scottish infantry regiments. [199391]

Mr. Darling: My right hon. Friend and I have had recent discussions on a range of issues including the future of the Scottish infantry regiments.

Rail Services

15. **Mr. Russell Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with *(a)* the First Minister and *(b)* train operating companies in respect of the recent timetable changes on the West Coast Main Line. [199392]

Mr. Darling: Recent timetable changes reflect the outcomes of the Strategic Rail Authority's "West Coast Strategy" for extensive up-grading work on this line. The strategy was published in July 2003 following extensive consultation with the rail industry, the Scottish Executive, national and local politicians, local authorities and others.

Fisheries

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the Fisheries Commissioner on the impact of the Common Fisheries Policy on Scotland. [199387]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend and I have had no recent discussions with the Fisheries Commissioner. Fisheries is a devolved matter and the Scottish Executive Minister for Environment and Rural Development is fully involved in the development and presentation of the UK position in Brussels. I keep in close touch with developments.

Public Sector Job Relocation

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the impact of the Lyons Review in areas of Scotland not named in the King Sturge report; and what role his Department is taking in public sector job relocation to Scotland. [199386]

Mr. Darling: The King Sturge report was intended to be used as a guide to Departments when considering relocation opportunities and is not definitive. The choice of locations is for individual Departments to decide based on operational need.

I have made the advantages of Scotland as a location clear to other Government Departments and have encouraged them to consider Scotland when reviewing relocation plans. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, has agreed to a meeting to discuss the matter further.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

Devolution (Prisons)

20. **Rosemary McKenna:** To ask the Advocate-General how many devolution issues she has dealt with regarding prisoner complaints about prison conditions. [199397]

The Advocate-General: I have received intimation of 175 devolution issues minutes which concern prisoner complaints regarding prison conditions.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Citizenship Education

37. **Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the Leader of the House what representations he has made to Education Ministers to give more emphasis to Parliament in the school citizenship syllabus. [200072]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend has drawn to the attention of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills the recommendation of the Modernisation Committee, in its report on "Connecting Parliament with the Public", that Ministers re-examine the balance of the citizenship curriculum to ensure that it provides young people with an understanding of Parliament and the political process.

Post-legislative Scrutiny

39. **Tony Wright:** To ask the Leader of the House what plans he has to bring forward proposals for improving post-legislative scrutiny. [200074]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend is sympathetic to the case for more post-legislative scrutiny, both with Government and by Parliament, though he is conscious of the potential resource implications. The Government are currently considering its response to the recent report of the House of Lords Constitution Committee on "Parliament and the Legislative Process", which contains a number of recommendations in this area.

Parliamentary Questions

40. **Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward proposals to carry over written questions unanswered at the end of one session to the start of the next. [200075]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so. I refer my hon. Friend again to the Written Ministerial Statement which the Leader of the House made on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 35WS, on "I will write replies".

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Advantage West Midlands

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the projects and investments undertaken by Advantage West Midlands meet European state aid requirements. [199569]

Jacqui Smith: Advantage West Midlands (AWM) works within the policy and performance framework provided by the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 and guidance and direction issued by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. This policy framework ensures among other things, that particular programmes or projects do not conflict with national or European rules or agreements, such as state aids.

AWM has incorporated State Aids considerations into its project appraisal system to ensure that all projects are compliant with Current State Aids rules. AWM also employs both a state aid and legal advisor to ensure compliance and to offer the necessary support and guidance to its personnel.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to which projects Advantage West Midlands has issued letters imposing claw-back requirements so that funding may be withheld or withdrawn even if schemes reach output performance targets. [199570]

Jacqui Smith: When Advantage West Midlands (AWM) contracts with partners, it issues the standard grant contract that clearly defines the claw-back conditions upon which grant is offered and relates to non-performance or breach of contract. AWM has not issued any letters imposing claw-back of funding to a partner when the partner has met their output performance requirements.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether Advantage West Midlands is expected to meet key performance targets on *(a)* learning opportunities created, *(b)* jobs created and safeguarded, *(c)* new business created and attracted and *(d)* other areas in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06. [199571]

Jacqui Smith: As with all regional development agencies, (RDAs) Advantage West Midlands (AWM) performance is currently measured against key five core performance outputs, known as Tier 3. The following table shows the targets agreed with AWM for 2004–05.

£

Tier 3 milestones	*Target 2004–05*
Jobs created and safeguarded	11,200
Businesses created or assisted	220
Brownfield land	75
Learning opportunities created	9,700
Investment benefiting deprived areas	10,000,00

All RDAs will shortly be submitting their mid-year progress reports on their achievements against the 2004–05 Tier 3 targets. The results are expected to be laid before Parliament, before the Christmas Parliamentary Recess. Similarly, the end of year results for achievements against the Tier 3 targets will be published next summer.

2004–05 will be the last year for Tier 3 outputs. For 2005–06 we are introducing a new performance Framework for RDAs, known as the Tasking Framework, and the final version of this is expected to be issued shortly. All RDAs will need to set their 2005–06 targets in the context of this new framework.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much Advantage West Midlands will make available for revenue funding on new projects in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 (i) in regeneration zones and (ii) elsewhere in the region. [199575]

Jacqui Smith: Advantage West Midlands (AWM) has provided £19.8 million of revenue resources to the Regeneration Zones in 2004–05 which has now been legally committed in full. AWM's allocation for 2005–06 has not yet been confirmed by Government.

AWM currently has no revenue resources available for new projects in 2004–05, whether in or outside the Regeneration Zone.

Batteries

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of alternatives to nickel-cadmium batteries for uses that *(a)* require reliability and high discharge and charge rates and *(b)* need to operate at low temperatures. [200281]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department keeps under review published information on the technical performance of rechargeable batteries, such as nickel-metal hydride and lithium-ion varieties.

Better Regulation Team

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what occasions her Department's Better Regulation team has stipulated that DTI policy officials give serious consideration to alternatives to state regulation since 2002. [200951]

Nigel Griffiths: It is an integral part of the Better Regulation team's ongoing work to ensure that policy officials give serious consideration to alternatives to state regulation.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what occasions her Department's Better Regulation team has involved independent experts in regulatory policy making since 2002. [200952]

Nigel Griffiths: Departmental policy is to consult widely on all regulatory policy proposals. This ensures that all interested parties, including independent experts, have the opportunity to contribute.

Business Support

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding each Knowledge Transfer Partner sponsor provided in the last year for which figures are available; and what each sponsor's criteria for funding are. [201116]

Nigel Griffiths: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1906W.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Knowledge Transfer Partnerships have been part-funded by Government grant; and what the total cost of these grants was. [201182]

Nigel Griffiths: In 2003–04 there were 285 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships at a cost of £13,906,499.

The total number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships since the launch in July 2003 until 30 September 2004 has been 529 at a cost of £28,721,457.

Since the launch of the Teaching Company Scheme (TCS the forerunner of KTP) in 1975, until the launch of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) in July 2003, there, have been 4458 Partnerships at a cost of £242,483,844.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses in each region have benefited from a Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea; and to what value. [200534]

Nigel Griffiths: 371 businesses have benefited from a Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea since its launch in June 2003, with a total value of £2,056,941. This is split by region as follows:

Region	*Number of businesses receiving grant for III*	*Total value of offers (£)*
East	65	355,804
East Midlands	76	391,508
London	45	251,294
North East	1	8,100
North West	14	95,489
South East	49	283,180
South West	26	136,609
West Midlands	48	269,359
Yorkshire and the Humber	47	265,597

Business Volunteering Mentoring Scheme

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which businesses are involved in the Business Volunteering Mentoring Scheme; and what assessment she has made of the scheme's contribution to British enterprise. [199862]

Nigel Griffiths: There are currently about 1,000 active mentors.

The Business Volunteer Mentoring (BVM) initiative aims to assist pre and early start-up business with free mentoring support. Some 37,000 clients have been assisted under it and regular reports are received on client feedback and other aspects of the initiative's progress. An initial assessment of the BVM was conducted in 2001, following the first year pilot phase, and it is envisaged that a further review may be conducted as part of a wider assessment of the provision of start-up support.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to give resources to citizens advice bureaux to enable them to improve the money advice service that they provide. [199877]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As announced in the 2004 Spending Review, the Government wish to see a significant increase in the capacity of the free face-to-face money advice sector over the Spending Review period. The Government will invite proposals to expand the provision of advice from potential providers and will also pilot different models of debt outreach. More details on these proposals will be published later in the year.

Compliance Costs

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her estimate is of the costs to business of compliance with regulations imposed by her Department in the last year for which figures are available. [200270]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* All proposals which impact on business, charities or the voluntary sector require a regulatory impact assessment (RIA) which includes details of the costs, benefits and risks of the proposal. RIAs are subject to public consultation and copies of final RIAs are available from the House Libraries and on departmental websites.

Debt

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is taking to curb the levels of personal debt. [199878]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Credit is an integral part of our daily lives. It makes a vital contribution to the UK economy: driving economic activity by allowing consumers flexibility in how they choose to access the marketplace and manage their finances; and enabling resources to be put to their most efficient use. Manageable borrowing provides an immense benefit and, in the majority of cases, consumers are using credit successfully.

We have introduced regulations to improve the transparency of the form and content of credit agreements, empowering consumers by ensuring that they have all the relevant information necessary to make informed decisions about their borrowing. We will shortly be introducing the Consumer Credit Bill which will strengthen the credit licensing regime and end unfair selling practices, so strengthening responsible lending.

In the minority of cases where credit leads to over-indebtedness we are working to improve the support and processes for those who have fallen into debt. On 20 July 2004 I published "Tackling Over-indebtedness—Action Plan 2004" which sets out work across Government to bring out a step change in the availability of free debt advice, ensure that wherever possible, debt problems and disputes are resolved without the stress and additional expense of court proceedings and improve the insolvency and court provisions for those needing to access them.

Energy Supplies

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has made for the delivery of secure energy supplies this winter; and what the make-up of those supplies is. [200191]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government are committed to maintain secure energy supplies—it is one of the four goals of the Government's energy policy as set out in the Energy White Paper, which we published in February 2003. We believe that a diverse market-based approach is the best way of delivering energy security.

This approach is working well. National Grid Transco's assessment in their "Winter Outlook Report" is that supplies of gas should be sufficient to meet this winter's needs. National Grid also advise that there is enough electricity generating capacity to meet demand, although guarantees of 100 per cent. security can never be given.

Electricity is generated from a number of different sources in the UK, including gas, coal and oil burn, renewable generation and nuclear power. The overall balance between these different sources is a matter for the market.

EU Battery Directive

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the UK Government's position on the proposed EU Battery Directive [COM (2003) 723 final]. [200506]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: While the Government supports the two broad perspective of the proposed Directive on Batteries and Accumulators—to contribute to a high level of environmental protection and to contribute to the proper functioning of the internal market, the detail is still being discussed. These seek to reduce the quantity of hazardous and non-hazardous waste batteries going to landfill and would increase recovery of their materials. At the same time, the Government wants an effective and workable Directive whose costs are proportionate to its environmental benefits.

Financial Advice

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the need for *(a)* money advice and *(b)* debt counselling services. [199876]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have carried out various pieces of work with the free debt advice sector to assess the need for money advice and debt counselling services. This includes work to evaluate the National Debtline and work to identify the potential shortfall in supply versus demand for free debt advice services for the telephone gateway project.

We continue to work closely with the Department for Constitutional Affairs to examine the effects of debt advice and methods of delivery. The Department for Constitutional Affairs has recently commissioned the Legal Services Research Centre to carry out research into the impact of debt advice. This work is expected to report back towards the end of 2005.

Fuel Poverty

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* fuel-poor and *(b)* vulnerable fuel-poor households there were in (i) the UK, (ii) each region and (iii) each constituency in each year since 1997. [200554]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Since 1996, the number of fuel poor households in the UK is as follows.

Number in fuel poverty

Million

	1996	*1998*	*2001*	*2002*
England	4.3	3.3	1.7	1.4
Scotland	0.7	—	—	0.3
Wales	—	0.2	—	—
Northern Ireland	—	0.2	0.16	—
UK Estimate	5.5	4.5	2.4	2.1
Vulnerable Groups	4.0	3.7	2.2	1.75

Figures for 1997, 1999 and 2000 are not available. In addition, as fuel poverty is a devolved issue, figures have been collected on a country-by-country basis, with varying definitions and time frames covered.

Data for England will, in future, be sourced from this new rolling English House Condition Survey (conducted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), and will be published annually. The first set of annual data, that for 2003, will be published in 2005 in the 3rd UK Fuel Poverty Strategy Annual Report.

Data is available for Scotland based on the 2002 Scottish House Condition Survey, conducted by Communities Scotland. The first set of regular annual data for Scotland will be released in 2007, and will relate to 2006 figures.

Northern Ireland will continue with a five-yearly House Condition Survey and the next survey will be conducted in 2006.

The Welsh Assembly's current estimates of fuel poverty are based on eligibility for the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme. Initial results of the new Welsh Household and Dwelling Survey are likely to be available in 2005, and thereafter annually.

More detailed Regional data has been extrapolated from the 2001 English House Condition Survey as follows:

Government office region	*Number of households in fuel poverty*
North East	105,000
Yorkshire and the Humber	238,000
North West	277,000
East Midlands	160,000
West Midlands	228,000
South West	201,000
Eastern	139,000
South East	224,000
London	148,000

No data is available at constituency level.

Gas

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* other countries and *(b)* UK companies on the prospects for importing gas from abroad; and if she will make a statement. [200739]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Further to the answer given by the then Minister for Energy, the hon. Member for East Ham (Mr. Timms), gave to the hon. Member's question on 13 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 504W.

Negotiations with the Norwegians for a new Framework Treaty are nearing completion. The Treaty will facilitate a wide range of cross-boundary projects and in particular the construction of the new Langeled South gas pipeline to meet up to 20 per cent. of UK gas demand from winter 2006–07. The new Balgzand—Bacton Dutch Interconnector is also expected to be operational for winter 2006–07.

During a trade visit to Russia in June, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry held meetings, including with Russian Industry and Energy Minister Victor Khristenko, on a wide range of energy-related matters. Licensing, the regulation of projects under Production Sharing Agreements, and energy co-operation during the UK's G8 and EU Presidencies were some of the issues discussed.

The department is in regular contact with the commercial sponsors of gas import projects. And, although progressing gas import projects is a commercial matter, the Joint Energy Security of Supply Working Group (JESS), chaired by DTI, publishes a regular overview of security of supply indicators, including details of forthcoming planned gas import projects.

As set out in the White Paper "Our energy future—creating a low carbon economy" published in February 2003, the Government believes that allowing the free operation of a competitive British market, within an appropriate regulatory framework, is the most efficient way to ensure security of supply of gas. Commercial operators have incentives to ensure a diversity of sources of gas, of supply routes and of entry points so as to reduce the risk of supply interruption through disruption of any one source or supply route.

General Product Safety Directive

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the issues are which have given rise to the delay in the transposition of the General Product Safety Directive 2001/95/EC. [201177]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As I stated in my answer of 5 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1645W, the main delays have resulted from getting the powers introducing the last resort product recall provisions right. There were also delays at the European Commission in providing guidance to support some important practical aspects of the Directive.

Other issues have included ensuring compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, devolution issues and pursuing the possibility through the draft Regulations to be able to prosecute across local authority borders for breaches of the Regulations and more efficient product safety enforcement.

Glenmorangie

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will refer the acquisition of Glenmorangie by LVMH to the Competition Commission. [200507]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The independent competition authorities (the Office of Fair Trading and the Competition Commission) are responsible under the Enterprise Act 2002 for decision-making in merger cases, with Ministers having no role in this process. The Office of Fair Trading undertakes an initial investigation of each merger case before deciding whether to refer to the Competition Commission.

Job Creation

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of jobs which *(a)* moved abroad from the UK and *(b)* were created in the UK in 2004. [199863]

Ms Hewitt: There are no official estimates of this kind. Announcements by companies of decisions to transfer operations offshore do not necessarily imply equivalent job losses in the UK. They can be accounted for by business growth, and are often accompanied by no compulsory redundancy policies. Offshoring also represents a very small amount of activity compared to total UK employment, which at 28 million is now at record levels.

Miners' Compensation Scheme

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will list the top 100 solicitors with unsettled claims under the coalminers compensation scheme, broken down by number of claims for *(a)* chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and *(b)* vibration white finger: [200374]

(2) if she will list the top 100 solicitors in terms of fees paid by the Department under the coalminers' compensation scheme; and how much each has been paid to date: [200375]

(3) what the average settlement is for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and vibration white finger claims for the top 100 solicitors, defined by number of claims submitted, under the coalminers' compensation scheme. [200376]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answers 29 November 2004]:* IRISC, the Department's claim handlers, are unable to provide the statistics in the format requested in the time available.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid to the Union of Democratic Mineworkers for carrying out spirometry testing under the coalminers' compensation scheme. [200377]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The UDM have never carried out spirometry testing however Atos origin had previously leased premises from the UDM at Berry Hill in Mansfield for carrying out spirometry testing. They have since moved out. Any financial arrangements with the UDM regarding the premises are a matter for UDM and Atos origin.

Parliamentary Questions

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons it did not prove possible to provide a substantive response before Prorogation to the question number 185322 tabled by the hon. Member for Gordon (Malcolm Bruce). [199696]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Regrettably the database used by the Department did not identify the hon. Member's outstanding question as remaining unanswered until just prior to Prorogation. However I have now provided him with a substantive answer and have arranged for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Post Office

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria her Department uses to determine a qualifying settlement of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants for the purposes of the Sub-Post Office Start-up Capital Subsidy Scheme. [199699]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The decision to classify a post office branch as urban or rural is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. The company classifies as rural any post office within a community of less than 10,000 inhabitants. Above that the post office is classified as urban. I understand that the company has a sophisticated geographical mapping model that enables them to adopt a consistent approach to classification across the country.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Post Office about the continuance of the free postal service for people who are blind; and if she will make a statement. [200735]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had no discussions with Royal Mail regarding the continuation of its free articles for the blind service. However, I understand that they remain committed to continuing this valuable service.

Post Office Closures

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the post offices which have closed in *(a)* the 10 per cent. most deprived wards and *(b)* the 20 per cent. most deprived wards in each year since 2000, broken down by region. [200551]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We do not hold the requested information. Post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the rural post offices which have closed since the introduction of the subsidy to support the rural post office network, broken down by region. [200553]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We do not hold the requested information. Post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much electricity was generated from renewable sources in the most recent year for which figures are available; how much of this amount qualified under the renewables obligation; and if she will make a statement. [200736]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The latest available information relates to 2003 and is published in the Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2004, Table 7.4. In that year 10,649 GWh of electricity was generated from renewable sources (2.7 per cent. of electricity generated in the UK). Of this 7,186 GWh came from sources eligible under the Renewables Obligation (2.2 per cent. of UK electricity sales).

Royal Mail (Size-based Pricing)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Royal Mail about its proposals for size-based pricing; and if she will make a statement. [199486]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I meet with Royal Mail Board members from time to time but have had no specific discussions with Royal Mail, or with Postcomm, about size based pricing.

Royal Mail's application to introduce size based pricing is currently being considered by the postal regulator, Postcomm. The progress made in considering the application and the assessment of the effect of size based pricing are matters for Royal Mail and Postcomm.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the Royal Mail's proposals for size-based pricing on the mail order photofinishing industry. [199488]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Royal Mail's application to introduce size based pricing is currently being considered by the postal regulator, Postcomm. The progress made in considering the application and the assessment of the effect of size-based pricing are matters for Royal Mail and Postcomm.

Postcomm is considering the large number of responses they received to their consultation on Royal Mail's proposals. In view of the complexity of the issues involved and the significant implications for many Royal Mail customers, Postcomm and Royal Mail have agreed that more time is required to assess the size-based pricing proposal. Accordingly, the earliest implementation date, if the application is allowed to proceed, will be April 2006.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact on the greetings card industry of the Royal Mail's proposals to move to size-based pricing. [199489]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Royal Mail's application to introduce size-based pricing is currently being considered by the postal regulator, Postcomm. The progress made in considering the application and the assessment of the effect of size-based pricing are matters for Royal Mail and Postcomm.

Postcomm is considering the large number of responses they received to their consultation on Royal Mail's proposals. In view of the complexity of the issues involved and the significant implications for many Royal Mail customers, Postcomm and Royal Mail

have agreed that more time is required to assess the size-based pricing proposal. Accordingly, the earliest implementation date, if the application is allowed to proceed, will be April 2006.

Utilities (Appointment Times)

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make representations to the utility regulators to place conditions on utility providers to ensure that appointment times for provision of services are made time specific. [200151]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* I have no such plans. Under Guaranteed Standards of Performance, introduced by the regulator, gas and electricity companies are already obliged to make a morning or afternoon appointments or, if requested by the customer, a timed appointment. Failure to meet the standard, including failing to keep the appointment without adequate notice results in a £20 payment to the customer.

The Office of Communications (Ofcom) regulates BT, but has no specific provisions relating to appointments for service provision. BT offers morning or afternoon, appointments and can narrow the slot down to within a two-hour time range if requested. BT will pay the customer 10 compensation for a missed morning or afternoon slot, but tell us they will not guarantee the offering of a two-hour window.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Magistrates Courts (East Anglia)

27. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he next expects to meet representatives of local magistrates from East Anglia to discuss court modernisation programmes. [200061]

Mr. Leslie: While I have no immediate plans to meet magistrates from East Anglia, I am happy to consider any invitations to do so. Officials in my Department are already in dialogue with the shadow courts boards in East Anglia. They will consider the local courts' draft business plan in consultation with magistrates and other interested parties.

House of Lords

28. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on reforming the House of Lords. [200062]

Mr. Leslie: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave the hon. Gentleman for Cannock Chase earlier today.

Electoral Reform

29. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Secretary of State has to change the electoral system for elections to the House of Commons. [200063]

Mr. Leslie: The Government remain committed to their manifesto in respect of electoral systems and will make an announcement on the time of a review at an appropriate moment.

Claims Direct

30. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions his Department has had with representatives of Claims Direct in the last five years. [200064]

Mr. Lammy: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 29W.

Court Dress

31. **Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress is being made in reforming court dress. [200065]

Mr. Leslie: The Lord Chancellor plans to discuss the way forward on court working dress with the senior judiciary.

Supreme Court

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made in locating suitable premises for the proposed Supreme Court. [200066]

Mr. Leslie: The Government have previously announced that Middlesex Guildhall and the new wing, Somerset House are under consideration as locations for the Supreme Court. The Government shall continue to investigate the relative qualitative and financial merits of the building options in consultation with the Law Lords, English Heritage and Westminster city council, and will provide an update before the Constitutional Reform Bill reaches this House.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Chris Ruane: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average length of time taken by courts *(a)* hearing and *(b)* granting antisocial behaviour orders was for each court area in the last period for which figures are available. [199556]

Mr. Leslie: No data are available on the average length of time taken by the courts to *(a)* hear or *(b)* grant antisocial behaviour orders. Information on the length of hearings is not collected on the basis of particular types of proceedings. In July 2004, the Government identified 12 "anti-social behaviour response courts" which are focused on dealing effectively with antisocial behaviour in particular on dealing with cases efficiently. We are now seeking to identify further magistrates courts where this approach would be useful, and to roll out the lessons learned to all magistrates courts.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World

Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199622]

Mr. Leslie: My Department, as a service provider, is obliged by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to make its public facing online services and publications accessible and to provide alternative user-friendly formats on request. This is in line with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (version 1.0). The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) adheres to these guidelines. 90 per cent. of publications uploaded to our site are in HTML format.

Electoral Review

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he expects to announce the review of electoral systems. [200279]

Mr. Leslie: The Government remain committed to their manifesto in respect of the reviews of electoral systems and will make any announcement on the time of a review at an appropriate moment.

Legal Aid

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Department has to promote the use of legal expenses insurance to the public as an addition to the cover provided by civil legal aid. [200986]

Mr. Lammy: The Government welcome the continuing growth in the market for "before-the-event" legal expenses insurance. We understand from insurance firms themselves that the breadth of coverage for LEI has grown substantially in recent years, and this has encouraged the Government in their wish to focus civil legal aid more carefully on the most vulnerable.

A consultation has recently closed on a package of reforms to the civil legal aid scheme to encourage early resolution of disputes; discourage unnecessary litigation and re-prioritise funding to ensure it is better targeted at deserving cases. This included a proposal to identify those applicants with "before-the-event" insurance early on, so that they can rely on this insurance rather than on public funding. We will announce the way forward on this in due course.

Libra Project

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the 44th report from the Committee of Public Accounts, Session 2002–03, whether the Libra Project is being delivered on *(a)* time and *(b)* budget; and what steps the Department has taken to ensure that outcome. [200053]

Mr. Leslie: Libra IT infrastructure was delivered two months early—in September 2003. The development of the Libra case management software is, however, taking longer than anticipated. We are working with our suppliers to establish a firm schedule for deployment and expect to be able to confirm this before Christmas. Precise costs depend on rollout timing, but the Department expects to manage any changes within its overall allocation and without any increase in the amount paid for the software.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Website (Young People)

38. **Mr. David Stewart:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire representing the House of Commons Commission what representations he has received in favour of a House of Commons website for young people aimed at increasing turnout at the next election. [200073]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Commission has not received any such submissions from the public. It agrees with the Modernisation Committee that the Parliament website should be continually improved. There have been a number of recent improvements with more to come. Research will shortly be commissioned on how the website could be better designed to reach out to various target audiences, and especially to be more accessible to young people.

TREASURY

Afghanistan

David Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on operations in Afghanistan; and how much has been allocated for future operations. [200230]

Mr. Boateng: Between 2001–02 and 2003–04 MOD drew down a total of £677 million through Main and Supplementary Estimates for the military operations in Afghanistan.

It is too early to assess the costs for 2004–05 and subsequent financial years.

Africa (Debt Cancellation)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which countries in Africa have had their debts cancelled in each of the last three years. [200943]

Mr. Timms: Sinee September 2003, seven countries (Guyana, Nicaragua, Niger, Ethiopia, Senegal, Ghana, Madagascar) have reached completion point in the HIPC initiative. All of these countries are now receiving irrevocable debt relief, taking the total number of post-completion point countries to 15 (March 2003—Benin, Mali; June 2002—Mauritania; April 2002—Burkina Faso; November 2001—Tanzania; September 2001—Mozambique; June 2001—Bolivia; May 2000—Uganda).

A further 12 countries are at decision point and are receiving interim debt relief (July 2003—Dem. Rep. of Congo; March 2002—Sierra Leone; May 2001—Chad; December 2000—Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Malawi, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Zambia; October 2000—Cameroon; June 2000—Honduras).

However many countries are still having to chose between servicing their debt and investing in health, education, infrastructure and other areas necessary to

allow them to attain the Millennium Development Goals. That is why the UK is proposing that we match bilateral debt relief of up to 100 per cent. with multilateral debt relief of up to 100 per cent. The UK will provide its share, approximately 10 per cent., of multilateral debt owed by eligible countries to the International Development Association and African Development Bank, and will continue to call on others to join us in this initiative.

Alcohol and Tobacco Tax

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value of revenue from taxation of alcohol and alcoholic products was in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [199611]

John Healey: Excise duty receipts for alcoholic products are included in the HM Customs and Excise 'Bulletins', for Spirits, Wine, Beer and Cider, which can be found on a HM Customs and Excise website address at:

<http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=statbulltwo>.

The estimated Value Added Tax (VAT) receipts for alcohol products for the financial year 2003–04 are not available, as information on VAT for included products is not routinely collected.

Childbirths

Martin Linton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children have been born to mothers resident in each constituency in the UK since 1 September 2002. [199495]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Martin Linton, dated 30 November 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning the number of children born to mothers resident in each constituency of the UK since 1st September 2002. I am replying in his absence. (199495)

I am placing information on the number of live births by parliamentary constituency in the House of Commons library.

Cold-related Deaths

Mr. Challen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many winter cold related deaths have been recorded in each year since 1997, broken down by country and region in the UK; and how many of these were attributed to hypothermia. [199698]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Dennis Roberts to Mr. Colin Challen, dated 30 November 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many winter cold-related deaths have been recorded in each year since 1997, broken down by country and region in the UK; and how many of these were attributed to hypothermia. I am replying in his absence. (199698)

Numbers of cold-related deaths are not available, as cold is not recorded as a cause of death in itself. ONS does however publish annual excess winter death figures. These are the excess number of deaths each winter compared to the average during other months of the year. These figures are not routinely calculated for the United Kingdom but results for England and Wales and Government Office Regions in England have been published for winters from 1991/1992 to 2003/2004. This report, "Excess Winter Mortality—By Age Group and Region" can be found on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7089

For the period 1997 to 2003 (the latest year for which data are currently available) the annual total number of deaths where hypothermia was mentioned on the death certificate are presented in the attached table.

Deaths with a mention of hypothermia[1] on the death certificate, for the United Kingdom and constituent countries and Government Office Regions in England[2] 1997 to 2003[3]

Country/Government Office Region	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
United Kingdom	439	422	403	373	336	259	236
England	343	326	305	298	244	176	176
North East	11	18	8	15	8	10	5
North West	34	36	38	39	31	23	17
Yorkshire and The Humber	29	39	30	23	29	19	20
East Midlands	21	26	41	26	20	13	16
West Midlands	41	48	49	45	32	26	23
East of England	57	42	44	48	35	19	23
London	37	33	28	32	18	16	20
South East	59	54	42	49	39	31	33
South West	54	30	25	21	32	19	19
Wales	14	26	20	14	16	99	
Scotland	60	48	66	49	60	61	43
Northern Ireland	22	22	12	12	16	14	8

[1] Deaths with a mention of hypothermia defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) code N991.6 for the years 1997 to 2000 and, for the years 2001 to 2003, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code T68.
[2] Deaths of usual residents for these areas.
[3] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year for England and Wales and deaths registered in each calendar year for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many excess winter deaths were recorded within *(a)* the South West Government office region, *(b)* the North Somerset local authority area and *(c)* the Weston-Super-Mare constituency in each of the last five years. [199764]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Dennis Roberts to Mr. Brian Cotter, dated 30 November 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many excess winter deaths were recorded within *(a)* the South West Government Office Region, *(b)* the North Somerset local authority area and *(c)* the Weston-Super-Mare constituency in each of the last five years. I am replying in his absence. (199764)

The figures requested are presented in the table below from 1998/1999 to 2002/2003, the last winter for which figures are available for local authorities and parliamentary constituencies, and for which final figures have been published for Government Office Regions. For 2003/2004 a provisional figure of 2,300 excess winter deaths has been published for the South West Government Office Region. Figures are not yet available for smaller areas.

Excess winter deaths[1] for winters 1998–99 to 2002–03

	Excess winter deaths[2]		
Winter	*South West Government Office Region*	*North Somerset local authority*	*Weston-Super-Mare parliamentary constituency*
1998–99	4,130	160	100
1999–2000	4,730	140	40
2000–01	2,270	130	50
2001–02	2,740	60	60
2002–03	2,360	80	50

[1] Excess winter deaths are defined by the Office for National Statistics as the difference between the number of deaths during the four winter months (December to March) and the average number of deaths during the four preceding months (August to November) and the following four months (April to July).
[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Customs and Excise (Scotland)

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many investigation officers employed by Customs and Excise work *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time or on secondment within Scotland. [200979]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is as follows:

(a) HM Customs and Excise has 85 Law Enforcement investigation staff based in Scotland including two officers seconded to the Crown Office, Financial Crime Unit and Civil Recovery Unit to support the Lord Advocate's Proceeds of Crime Act strategy.

(b) There are no part-time investigation officers or investigation officers seconded from elsewhere in the UK to Scotland. However any Law Enforcement investigation officer employed by HM Customs and Excise may be required to work in Scotland in response to operational circumstances.

Departmental Jobs

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* full-time, *(b)* part-time and *(c)* temporary jobs his Department and its executive agencies have had in (i) the Scottish Borders and (ii) Scotland since 1997. [199576]

Mr. Timms: The answer is given as in the table.

Office of Government Commerce and OGC buying solutions

	Full-time		Part-time		Temporary	
As at 1 April each year	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*
2002	0	12	0	0	0	0
2003	0	11	0	0	0	0
2004	0	12	0	0	0	0

Note:
The Office of Government Commerce has been in existence since 1 April 2001.

Inland Revenue

	Full-time		Part-time		Temporary	
As at 1 April each year	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*
1997	28	n/a	9	n/a	0	60
1998	27	n/a	7	n/a	0	57
1999	28	n/a	8	n/a	0	83
2000	25	5,299	11	1,149	1	53
2001	28	5,334	14	1,225	2	30
2002	27	5,549	14	1,304	0	30
2003	26	6,409	15	2,210	0	0
2004	26	7,245	13	1,913	0	0

Notes:
1. Information is not available for the years marked "n/a".
2. The main reason for the IR staffing increase in Scotland over the years is the sitting of a number of the new IR Contact Centres in the Scotland.

Customs and Excise

	Full-time		Part-time		Temporary	
As at 1 April each year	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*
1997	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
1998	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
1999	0	1,309	0	48	0	19
2000	0	1,184	0	86	0	54
2001	0	1,165	0	55	0	20
2002	0	1,120	0	50	0	22
2003	0	1,132	0	48	0	14
2004	0	1,187	0	54	0	13

Notes:
1. Information is not available for the years marked "n/a".
2. The Customs and Excise data for 2004 is to be regarded as provisional as it is from internal C&E sources and not from the Civil Service Staffing statistics.
3. HM Customs and Excise have no offices within the Scottish Borders area and did not have any offices in 1997. Work within this area is covered by staff officially based in Edinburgh and other parts of the Scottish region.

Valuation office

	Full-time		Part-time		Temporary	
As at 1 April each year	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*
1997	0	78	0	7	0	11
1998	0	74	0	8	0	8
1999	0	71	0	9	0	0
2000	0	69	0	9	0	0
2001	0	66	0	10	0	0
2002	0	61	0	11	0	1
2003	0	60	0	10	0	7
2004	0	60	0	11	0	8

Department of National Savings and Investments

	Full-time		Part-time		Temporary	
As at 1 April each year	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*	*Scottish borders*	*Scotland*
1999	0	6	0	0	0	0
2000	0	6	0	0	0	0
2001	0	7	0	0	0	0

Department of National Savings and Investments

As at 1 April each year	Full-time		Part-time		Temporary	
	Scottish borders	Scotland	Scottish borders	Scotland	Scottish borders	Scotland
2002	0	7	0	0	0	0
2003	0	5	0	0	0	0
2004	0	3	0	0	0	0

Note:
Information prior to 1 April 1999 is not available.

HM Treasury, Debt Management Office, Office for National Statistics, Royal Mint, and Government Actuary's Department have no full-time, part-time and temporary jobs in the Scottish Borders or Scotland since 1997.

Departmental Training

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200395]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. For example, HM Customs and Excise alone delivered over 117,000 learning interventions last year.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200415]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Disabled Pension Tax Credits (Scotland)

David Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the introduction of the working and disabled pension tax credits has changed support to low income families in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Midlothian. [200078]

Dawn Primarolo: The introduction of the working and child tax credits has sharply increased the number of working families with low or moderate incomes in Scotland and in Midlothian who are benefiting from financial support. The number of disabled workers in Scotland benefiting from tax credits has increased even more sharply.

By April 2004, 201,800 families with children were receiving more than the family element of child tax credit in Scotland, 56 per cent. more than the number of families receiving working families' tax credit in November 2002. By January 2004, 3,100 families were receiving more than the family element of child tax credit in Midlothian, 57 per cent. more than the number receiving working families' tax credit in November 2002.

By April 2004, 7,600 households in Scotland were benefiting from the disabled worker element of working tax credit, more than double the number of households receiving disabled person's tax credit in October 2002. Data on the number of households in Midlothian benefiting from the disabled worker element of working tax credit are not yet available.

Economic Activity (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the economic activity rate in the London borough of Wandsworth was in each of the last three years. [199667]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Dennis Roberts to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 30 November 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about economic activity. I am replying in his absence. (199667)

The attached table shows the working age economic activity rates in the London Borough of Wandsworth for the twelve month periods ending in February each year from 2002 to 2004. These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Economic activity rate[1] in the London borough of Wandsworth 12 month period ending in February each year

	Percentage
2002	84.2
2003	80.5
2004	80.9

[1] Economically active persons as a percentage of all working age population. Working age refers to men aged 16 to 64 and women 16 to 59.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

E-Government

Paul Holmes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199690]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury, Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise are all committed to comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. HM Treasury has recently redesigned its public website templates to comply with the World Wide W3C Guidelines 1.0 Double-A. The Inland Revenue already follows the W3C Guidelines 1.0 Double-A and HM Customs and Excise is committed to achieving compliance with the minimum level of the W3C Guidelines and aims to exceed them where possible. The new merged department HM Revenue and Customs will be committed to comply with the guidelines.

Ethiopia

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether all debt owed by Ethiopia to the UK has been extinguished; and if he will make a statement. [200145]

Mr. Timms: The UK has written off 100 per cent. of debt owed by Ethiopia to the UK. Furthermore, under the recently proposed UK multilateral debt initiative Ethiopia will also qualify for multilateral debt relief as

a post-completion point Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC). The UK will pay its share, approximately 10 per cent., of multilateral debt service owed by Ethiopia to the International Development Association and African Development Bank, and will continue to call on others to join us in this initiative.

Euro

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will meet the European Commissioner for External Trade to discuss setting a target date for British entry into the euro. [199801]

Mr. Timms: As the Chancellor said in his 2004 Budget speech,

> "while the Government do not propose a euro assessment be initiated at the time of this Budget, the Treasury will again review progress at Budget time next year and report to the House".

Britain in Europe

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will next meet representatives of Britain in Europe; and at what dates in the last year he has met representatives of Britain in Europe. [199805]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor met most recently with representatives of Britain in Europe at their annual board meeting on 17 November. At present no further meetings have been scheduled.

Goodison Review

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to implement the recommendations of the Goodison Review: Securing the Best for our Museums; and if he will make a statement. [199705]

Mr. Boateng: In the 2004 Spending Review the Government announced that:

> annual funding for the National Heritage Memorial Fund will double by 2007–08, compared to 2004–05;
>
> the Renaissance in the Regions programme for regional museums will be extended to all nine English regions; and
>
> the free access commitment, which currently covers the main national museums and galleries, and the VAT refund scheme that helps deliver free access, will be extended to university museums and galleries.

Other recommendations relating to tax are being considered as part of our on-going work. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport also plans to transfer administrative functions to the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (formerly Resource) as recommended by the Goodison Review.

Household Water Supplies

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what percentage of households in the Greater London area were lacking the use of a hot water supply according to the 2001 Census; [199677]

(2) what percentage of households within the Greater London area were lacking the use of a bathroom according to the 2001 Census. [199678]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 30 November 2004:

The National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales has been asked to reply to your recent questions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking:

1. what percentage of households in the Greater London area were lacking the use of a hot water supply according to the 2001 Census (199677)

2. what percentage of households in the Greater London area were lacking the use of a bathroom according to the 2001 Census (199678).

I am replying in his absence.

A question about the availability of a hot water supply was not asked in the 2001 Census and consequently no figures are available.

In the 2001 Census respondents were asked whether they had sole use of a bath, shower or toilet for their household as opposed to whether they lacked the use of a bathroom altogether. On Census day (29 April 2001) 1.06% of households in the London Government Office Region (GOR) were without the sole use of a bath, shower or toilet. That figure includes households with shared access and households with no access.

The London GOR is equivalent to the administrative area of the Greater London Authority covering the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London. The figures have been extracted from Table UV60 on the *Census 2001—Census Area Statistics (CAS) for Output Areas, wards and higher administrative geographies in England and Wales* DVD, which is available in the House of Commons library.

Iraq

David Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been allocated for future engagements in Iraq; and how much has been spent on the operation in Iraq to date. [200226]

Mr. Boateng: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1504–05W.

Life Assurance

Norman Baker: To ask The Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he has taken in relation to the life assurance business following the publication of the Penrose Report. [200665]

Mr. Timms: The Government have enacted fundamental reform of the regulation of financial services by establishing the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as an integrated and independent regulator combining prudential and conduct of business regulation. A key part of the new regulatory regime is the creation of a comprehensive Financial Services Compensation Scheme and a single Financial Ombudsman Service.

The FSA has proceeded to introduce risk-based insurance regulation and individual capital standards. It is also in the process of introducing realistic accounting by life offices, including a requirement to reserve for terminal bonus. In addition, the use of future profits implicit items is being phased out.

The FSA is also removing responsibility for making key decisions on asset allocation and distribution in with-profits funds from the appointed actuary and transferring it to company boards and it has brought forward proposals on better treatment of customers by firms and fuller transparency of with-profits funds. Lord Penrose welcomed the FSA's regulatory reforms, which he said

"has sought to anticipate many of the lessons that might be drawn by this enquiry and it should come as no surprise that it has largely succeeded".

Subsequent to the Penrose report the Government have separately instigated a number of reviews which represent a significant opportunity to address the interests of future policyholders.

Paul Myners is reviewing the governance of mutual life offices to make their boards as accountable to their members as those of comparable companies to their shareholders.

Sir Derek Morris is leading a review of the actuarial profession considering how best to modernise the profession and see high standards are delivered in a more open, challenging and accountable professional culture.

The Accounting Standards Board has launched a review of the accounting framework for with-profits business with particular emphasis on improving the transparency of reporting.

Life Expectancy

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the life expectancy at birth of *(a)* a male and *(b)* a female belonging to social class (i) I, (ii) II, (iii) IINM, (iv) IIIM, (v) IV and (vi) V has been in each of the last 25 years for which figures are available. [199454]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Dennis Roberts to Mr. Andrew Lansley, dated 30 November 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the life expectancy at birth of *(a)* a male and *(b)* a female belonging to social class (i) I, (ii) II, (iii) IIINM, (iv) HIM, (v) IV and (vi) V has been in each of the last 25 years for which figures are available. I am replying in his absence. (199454)

Available figures are from the ONS Longitudinal Study, a one per cent. sample of the population. The most recently available estimates were published in Health Statistics Quarterly 15[1] for the period 1972 to 1999. The attached table presents life expectancy at birth by social class for males and females for five-year periods from 1972 to 1996, and for 1997–1999.

[1] Donkin, A., Goldblatt, P. and Lynch, K. (2002) Inequalities in life expectancy by social class, 1972–1999. Health Statistics Quarterly, 15:5–15.

Life expectancy at birth by sex and social class, 1972 to 1999, England and Wales

Years	1972–76	1977–81	1982–86	1987–91	1992–96	1997–99
Males						
I	72.0	74.7	75.1	76.7	77.7	78.5
II	71.7	72.4	73.8	74.4	75.8	77.5
IIIN	69.5	70.8	72.2	73.5	75.0	76.2
IIIM	69.8	70.0	71.4	72.4	73.5	74.7
IV	68.4	68.8	70.6	70.4	72.6	72.7
V	66.5	67.0	67.7	67.9	68.2	71.1
Females						
I	79.2	79.9	80.4	80.9	83.4	82.8
II	77.0	78.1	78.5	80.0	81.1	81.5
IIIN	78.0	78.1	78.6	79.4	80.4	81.2
IIIM	75.1	76.1	77.1	77.6	78.8	79.2
IV	75.0	76.1	77.3	77.0	111	78.5
V	73.9	74.9	75.3	76.2	77.0	77.1

Mortgage Income Tax Relief

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Government abolished mortgage income tax relief; and what the estimated change in taxation for a typical household with a mortgage over £30,000 in 2004–05 is due to its abolition. [200138]

Dawn Primarolo: The MIRAS scheme was abolished in April 2000. The value of relief payable on £30,000 of loans in 2004–05 would depend on the rate of interest charged on the loan.

Ms Emma Bowers

Helen Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Inland Revenue's handling of tax credits claimed by Ms Emma Bowers of Glazebury, Warrington. [200193]

Dawn Primarolo: I understand that the Inland Revenue has made a thorough investigation of Miss Bowers' case and has written to my hon. Friend about it.

Office for National Statistics

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the calculations of the *(a)* RPI and *(b)* CPI made by the Office for National Statistics take into account changes in the standard quantities of the representative commodities contained in the indices. [200591]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. James Arbuthnot, dated 30 November 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your parliamentary question asking how the calculations of the RPI and CPI made by the Office for National Statistics take into account changes in the standard quantities of the representative commodities contained in the indices. (200591)

Within each year, the RPI and CPI are fixed quantity consumer price indices. That is, changes in prices as measured by both indices are calculated as the change in the total cost to the average consumer of a basket of goods and services of fixed composition, quantity and quality.

In practice, this is achieved by *(a)* holding constant each year the sample of representative goods and services for which prices are collected each month in estimating price changes more generally; and *(b)* applying a fixed set of weights to price changes for each of the items such that their influence on the overall index reflects their importance in the typical household budget. In this way, changes in the RPI and CPI indices from month to month reflect only changes in prices, and not ongoing variations in consumer purchasing patterns.

However, the contents of the RPI and CPI baskets of goods and services and associated expenditure weights are updated annually so that the indices remain representative of consumer spending patterns over time. This is important in helping to avoid potential biases in consumer price indices that might otherwise arise, for example, due to the development of entirely new goods and

services, or the tendency for consumers to substitute purchases away from those particular goods and services for which prices have risen relatively rapidly.

For the RPI, changes to the items and weights are introduced in February each year, but with an overlapping collection of prices in January. This means that the figures for each year can be 'chain linked' together to form a long-run price index spanning many years. This procedure ensures that the annual changes to the basket and weights have no impact on estimated changes in prices as measured by the RPI. The same basic approach is likewise adopted in the CPI although, for technical reasons, it is necessary to chain link the published index twice each year rather than only once as in the RPI.

These issues are described in greater detail in a range of articles published by ONS, which are available on the National Statistics website. The basic principles underlying the construction of the RPI and CPI are described in:

David Roe and David Fenwick (2004) 'The New Inflation Target: the Statistical Perspective', Economic Trends No 602, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id = 688

The basket of goods and services employed in the calculation of ONS consumer price indices and the associated weights are described respectively in:

David Roe (2004), 'Consumer Prices Index and Retail Prices Index: the 2004 Basket of Goods and Services', http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/article.asp?ID = 864

David Baran (2004), 'Consumer Prices Index and Retail Prices Index: Updating weights for 2004', http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id = 891

Redundancies

Paul Holmes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many redundancies have been notified in each quarter of each year since June 2001, broken down by nation and region; what these figures represent as a percentage of the total work force, broken down by nation and region; and if he will make a statement. [199620]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Paul Holmes, dated 30 November 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about redundancy. (199620)

The Labour Force Survey provides estimates of redundancies experienced by survey respondents in the three month period before their survey interviews. The attached table gives Labour Force Survey estimates for number of redundancies in each nation and region of the UK for each three month period from 2001 to 2004. The table also shows redundancy rates, i.e. redundancies as a proportion of the number of employees in each area.

The estimates for the Labour Force Survey are, as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Redundancies: numbers and rates United Kingdom not seasonally adjusted

Thousand

Three months ending	*UK*	*GB*	*England*	*North east*[1]	*North west*	*Yorkshire and the Humber*	*East Midlands*	*West Midlands*
August 2001	175	171	145	8	21	14	12	18
November 2001	187	184	163	9	24	21	12	13
February 2002	209	204	173	11	25	11	14	20
May 2002	194	189	164	8	22	10	15	24
August 2002	173	169	144	5	20	15	11	21
November,2002	166	163	139	9	16	12	16	12
February 2003	183	179	149	9	20	13	13	21
May 2003	156	152	135	8	20	14	12	17
August 2003	153	148	129	4	16	8	15	21
November 2003	148	146	120	6	18	8	10	14
February 2004	137	134	116	6	22	10	11	10
May 2004	143	141	121	3	15	12	9	18
August 2004	135	133	121	7	16	11	13	11

Thousand

Three months ending	*Eastern*	*London*	*South east*	*South west*	*Wales*[1]	*Scotland*	*Northern Ireland*[1]
August 2001	20	16	26	10	9	16	4
November 2001	16	23	31	12	7	15	3
February 2002	17	24	35	15	11	21	4
May 2002	22	22	27	14	8	17	5
August 2002	15	20	21	16	7	18	4
November,2002	15	17	27	15	9	16	3
February 2003	16	21	24	11	13	18	3
May 2003	13	12	27	11	5	12	4
August 2003	12	16	26	11	7	12	4
November 2003	14	16	23	11	7	19	2
February 2004	16	15	17	9	5	13	3
May 2004	15	15	24	12	5	15	2
August 2004	12	16	21	13	4	8	2

[1] These estimates are based on small sample sizes and are therefore subject to a higher than usual degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Redundancies: numbers and rates United Kingdom not seasonally adjusted

Rate per 1,000 employees[1]

Three months ending	*UK*	*GB*	*England*	*North east*[2]	*North west*	*Yorkshire and the Humber*	*East Midlands*	*West Midlands*
August 2001	7.3	7.3	7.2	8.1	8.0	6.8	7.1	8.4
November 2001	7.8	7.8	8.0	9.7	9.1	10.3	7.1	6.2
February 2002	8.6	8.7	8.5	11.8	9.5	5.4	7.6	9.4
May 2002	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.3	8.0	5.1	8.3	11.2
August 2002	7.2	7.2	7.1	5.5	7.5	7.5	6.5	9.5
November 2002	6.8	6.9	6.8	8.8	6.0	6.1	8.8	5.5
February 2003	7.5	7.6	7.3	9.3	7.3	6.4	7.3	9.5
May 2003	6.4	6.4	6.6	8.1	7.4	6.9	7.0	7.9
August 2003	6.3	6.3	6.4	3.8	5.9	4.0	8.7	9.6
November 2003	6.1	6.2	5.9	6.0	6.6	3.6	5.7	6.7
February 2004	5.7	5.7	5.7	6.0	8.0	4.9	6.0	4.8
May 2004	5.9	6.0	6.0	2.7	5.5	5.7	5.1	8.4
August 2004	5.6	5.6	5.9	7.4	5.8	5.6	7.4	5.1

Rate per 1,000 employees[1]

Three months ending	*Eastern*	*London*	*South east*	*South west*	*Wales*[2]	*Scotland*	*Northern Ireland*[2]
August 2001	8.5	5.7	7.4	5.2	8.8	7.9	7.0
November 2001	7.0	7.8	8.9	6.1	6.5	6.9	4.6
February 2002	7.4	8.2	10.0	7.5	10.2	9.8	7.5
May 2002	9.6	7.5	7.8	7.1	8.1	8.1	8.4
August 2002	6.4	6.9	5.9	7.9	6.4	8.4	6.6
November 2002	6.6	5.6	7.7	7.4	8.3	7.5	4.3
February 2003	7.0	7.3	7.1	5.3	11.7	8.3	5.2
May 2003	5.7	4.2	7.9	5.5	4.8	5.5	6.1
August 2003	5.3	5.6	7.5	5.5	6.2	5.7	6.9
November 2003	6.3	5.7	6.7	5.2	5.8	8.8	3.3
February 2004	6.8	5.3	5.1	4.4	4.3	6.1	4.6
May 2004	6.4	5.2	6.9	5.6	4.5	6.9	2.9
August 2004	5.0	5.7	6.1	6.5	3.8	3.8	3.4

[1] The redundancy rate is the ratio of the redundancy level for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter, multiplied by 1,000.
[2] These estimates are based on small sample sizes and are therefore subject to a higher than usual degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Sikhs

Mr. Plaskitt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is discussing with the Office for National Statistics changes to the 2011 Census forms which would recognise Sikhs as an ethnic group. [200041]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. James Plaskitt, dated 30 November 2004:

The National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking about changes to the 2011 Census forms which would recognise Sikhs as an ethnic group. I am replying in his absence. (200041)

In planning for a census in 2011, arrangements will be put in place for consultation with a wide range of users on the form and content of the questions to be included, using similar criteria that were adopted in designing the 2001 Census form. The criteria used for 2001 were:

there is a clearly demonstrated need for the information;

users' requirements cannot adequately be met by information from other sources;

the questions should be shown, in tests, to have no significantly adverse effect on the Census as a whole, particularly the level of public response; and that

practicable questions can be devised to collect data that are sufficiently accurate to meet users' requirements.

We recognise that ethnicity is an ever-changing concept and we want to reflect the contemporary nature of British society. However, comparability over time remains a very important issue. Because ethnicity is multifaceted, the current National Statistics practice is to collect as much information as possible on associated factors. For example, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) has questions on national identity, ethnic group, religious affiliation, country of birth, and nationality.

It is also our view that we should test questions for the 2011 Census (when they are determined) before they are asked in the Census itself. In the meantime National Statistics guidelines on the measurement and collection of ethnicity data were published on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website earlier this year.

(http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/ethnic_group_statistics/)

They reflect the need for a balance between the prime requirement for comparability with the 2001 Census while, at the same time, acknowledging the fact that classifications are never set in stone.

The ethnicity question will be reviewed as part of the general preparations for the 2011 Census. A paper entitled 'Strategic issues surrounding the 2011 Census questionnaire Content' was presented to the Census Advisory Groups earlier this month. ONS will begin its formal external user consultation on 2011 Census topics with the production of a consultation document, which will be published in spring 2005. This will be available via the ONS website and circulated to key users through the formal Census Advisory Groups mechanism. This document will set out ONS'

current views on user requirements for outputs, along with information on the quality of 2001 Census responses and the key alternative sources for the information, and will seek responses by late summer 2005.

You may like to know that the British Sikh Federation are represented on the newly convened Special Populations Advisory Group which covers the interests of special and minority population groups.

Tax Credits

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he plans to take to assist those families who are having to repay money to the Inland Revenue as a result of tax credit overpayments caused by administrative failures. [199769]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?' sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

Overpayments are collected from continuing awards wherever possible, subject to automatic limits on how much they collect.

The Inland Revenue will accept that an overpayment should not be recovered if it arose because of their mistake and the person could reasonably have thought their award was right.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he plans to take to simplify the application *(a)* process and *(b)* forms for those families wishing to apply for the (i) working tax credit and (ii) child tax credit. [199771]

Dawn Primarolo: Claimants have to complete a claim form only once to get into the tax credits system. Thereafter, when they renew their claims each year, there are only two pages of a renewals form that need to be completed and returned. There is a straightforward step-by-step guide in every claim and renewals pack, as well as detailed guidance notes.

The Inland Revenue continually look to improve the process for people claiming tax credits, either using the claim form or online.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he is making available about the process for repayment to families who are having to repay money to the Inland Revenue as a result of tax credit overpayments caused by administrative failures. [199777]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?' sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

The Code of Practice is available on the Inland Revenue website or from the tax credits helpline.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the processing of completed application forms for *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit takes place in the UK. [200900]

Dawn Primarolo: Claimants send their completed tax credits claim forms to the Inland Revenue's office in Netherton, Merseyside, where they are processed. People can, of course, also claim online.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of tax credit overpayments for 2003–04; how many such overpayments have been accepted as the fault of the Inland Revenue; and how many such overpayments will be written off. [200925]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply given to him by my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1511W.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of what caused the Inland Revenue error that led to the overpayment of tax credit payments; and what action he is taking to ensure that such an error will not occur again in the future. [199768]

Dawn Primarolo: Details are in the Inland Revenue's Annual Report for 2003–04, published on 21 October 2004, at page 42 and at page 104 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General attached to it.

A software error in April and May 2003 caused incorrect payments of tax credits; the error was corrected for June 2003 onwards.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average length of time is that the Inland Revenue is taking to inform individual families that have received tax credit overpayments; and what period of notice is given before repayments of overpayments are requested. [199772]

Dawn Primarolo: Overpayments are established after the end of the tax year when an award has been finalised. When awards are finalised, claimants receive a final award notice setting out any overpayment that has arisen. Where there is a continuing entitlement to tax credits, overpayments are generally collected from future awards. But where that is not possible, the amount overpaid may be collected directly from the claimant. Information on the average length of time taken from identification of an overpayment and notifying the claimant of it is not available.

The approach the Revenue takes to overpayments is contained in their Code of Practice 26 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?' a copy of which has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Tobacco Tax

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value was of revenue from taxation on tobacco products in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [199610]

John Healey: Excise duty receipts for tobacco are included in the HM Customs and Excise Tobacco Bulletin', which can be found on a HM Customs and Excise website address at:

< http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?tasksstat = bulltwo >

The estimated Value Added Tax (VAT) receipts for tobacco for the financial year 2003–04 are not available, as information on VAT for individual products is not routinely collected.

Winter Deaths

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many excess winter deaths there were in each year since 1997 in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [200552]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 30 November 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many excess winter deaths there were in each year since 1997 in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each constituency. (200552)

Excess winter death figures (the excess number of deaths each winter compared to the average during other months of the year) are not routinely calculated for the United Kingdom. Results for England and Wales from 1997/1998 to 2003/2004 are presented in the attached table. These figures have been published with results for Government Office Regions in England for winters from 1991/1992 to 2003/2004. This report, "Excess Winter Mortality—By Age Group and Region" can be found on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7089

Published figures for 2003/2004 are currently provisional and not available for areas smaller than Government Office Regions. I am placing in the House of Commons Library, information on numbers of excess winter deaths by each parliamentary constituency for winters from 1997/1998 to 2002/2003.

Excess winter deaths,[1] England and Wales,[2] 1997–98 to 2003–04[3]

	Excess winter deaths[1,4]
1997–98	22,900
1998–99	46,840
1999–2000	48,440
2000–01	24,840
2001–02	27,230
2002–03	23,970
2003–04[3]	23,500

[1] Excess winter deaths are defined by the Office for National Statistics as the difference between the number of deaths during the four winter months (December to March) and the average number of deaths during the four preceding months (August to November) and the following four months (April to July).
[2] Including non-residents.
[3] Figures for 2003–04 are provisional.
[4] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Works of Art

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claims for conditional exemption for works of art were made in each year since 1976; and how many were accepted in each year. [199704]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Johnson) on 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1656–57W. Comparable figures for years before 1994 are not available.

HEALTH

Alcohol

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on his policy on the introduction of *(a)* compulsory and *(b)* voluntary labelling of units of alcohol on alcohol products; [200133]

(2) if he will make a statement on his policy on the introduction of *(a)* compulsory and *(b)* voluntary labelling of alcohol products with recommended units of alcohol consumption; [200134]

(3) if he will make a statement on his policy on the introduction of *(a)* compulsory and *(b)* voluntary labelling of alcohol products with recommendations regarding alcohol consumption by pregnant women. [200135]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The voluntary social responsibility scheme for drinks producers will strongly encourage drinks companies to participate in promoting well being, including putting the sensible drinking message clearly on bottles alongside information about unit content.

There are no plans to include compulsory or voluntary labelling of alcohol products regarding alcohol consumption by pregnant women. However, the Department is preparing a revised leaflet—"Drinking for two"—on drinking and pregnancy.

Aspergers Syndrome

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether people with Aspergers Syndrome who have an IQ of over 70 qualify for social services assessment under the fair access to care services practice guidelines; and if he will make a statement. [200106]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* A local authority social services department has a duty to carry out an assessment where it appears to them that someone may be in need of community care services. Decisions to carry out assessments are not made on the basis of a person's intelligence quotient.

Child Incontinence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to ensure children who are doubly incontinent are provided with more than five incontinence pads for every 24 hours; and if he will make a statement. [200150]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Department published "Good Practice in Continence Services" in April 2000. This provided health authorities and primary care trusts (PCTs) with good advice on various continence matters. This includes advice that PCTs should have specialist continence services in place, which provide patients with an individual assessment of their needs. Pads should be provided in quantities appropriate to the individual's continence needs. The setting of arbitrary ceilings is not appropriate.

Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget for the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence is in each of the next five years. [199928]

Mr. Hutton: The Council's budget for the current year, 2004–05, is £2 million. Budgets are agreed each year so that they can be informed by the Council's annual business plan.

Disabled People (Direct Payments)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which local authorities have set up support systems to enable them to make direct payments to disabled people. [200647]

Dr. Ladyman: We have made it mandatory for all local authorities to make direct payments to all eligible individuals who would like them. We do not monitor the number of local authorities who have set up support systems. However, we are spending £9 million over three years in grants to 108 different councils working in partnership with voluntary sector organisations to promote the use of direct payments. Other councils may have set up support systems using their general funding. In addition, grant funding went to two voluntary organisations working at a national level.

In addition, the Department has produced user-friendly information in a variety of formats promoting direct payments. Councils should supplement this with locally appropriate information.

Expenditure (Leeds)

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure on medicines switched from Leeds health authorities to the Prescription Pricing Authority has been since 1997–98. [200137]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not available, since expenditure accounted for by the Prescription Pricing Authority cannot be allocated to individual health bodies.

Food Additives

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency has made of the effects of artificial (i) colourings, (ii) flavourings and (iii) additives on children. [200424]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Responsibility for food safety lies with the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Food additives, including colourings, are authorised for use only after a rigorous safety assessment by independent scientific committees. This assessment includes a consideration of all age groups within the population. There is some concern on the effects of some food additives on the behaviour of children but the assessment of the results of studies have shown that there is still significant scientific uncertainty. The FSA has commissioned a study into the effects of some colourings and preservatives on children's behaviour, and results are expected in spring 2007.

The approval process of flavourings is different. All flavourings and indeed, each constituent of a flavouring blend, must be safe under the terms of the Food Safety Act 1990. The European Commission is working towards a positive list of permitted chemically defined flavouring substances (either natural, nature-identical or artificial). A European Union-wide register of flavouring substances, approximately 2,800 substances, provides the basis for this work on safety evaluations, currently being undertaken by the European Food Safety Authority.

GM Foods

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts regarding the right of member states to exclude genetically modified foods; and if he will make a statement. [200231]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* None.

Health Direct

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether Health Direct will be established as a subsidiary of NHS Direct; whether NHS Direct and Health Direct will share the same access points; and if he will make a statement. [199468]

Miss Johnson: The implementation of this and a number of other initiatives announced will be covered in a delivery plan for the White Paper, to be published early in 2005.

Health Trainers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS health trainers will be required to complete a criminal records check through the Criminal Records Bureau. [199475]

Mr. Hutton: All national health service staff with access to patients in the course of their normal duties are eligible for Criminal Records Bureau checks. These checks will be compulsory for all eligible new staff from 14 February 2005.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of delivering the proposals in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374; what methodology was used to make this estimate; what proportion of the cost will be met by funds provided *(a)* centrally and *(b)* from other funding sources; and if he will make a statement. [199450]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We will invest at least £1 billion in improving health over the next four years. We have calculated this figure by identifying the additional requirements of the Choosing Health White Paper and costing these on the basis of best evidence available.

. The allocation of funds is being considered by Ministers and announcements will be made early in 2005 from the Department's spending review settlement.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether all children will be provided with children's health guides under the Child Health Promotion programme, as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 23. [199452]

Dr. Ladyman: Children's health guides are a radical new approach to help children, parents and carers assess the child's health and set their own health goals. Everyone will have the opportunity to have a personal health guide if they want one, and will be able to develop their guide in electronic form, linked to their "HealthSpace" on the Internet. The implementation and details of this, and other initiatives, will become clearer early in 2005 when the Government will publish its delivery plan for the White Paper.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of the change in the number of deaths from passive smoking each year likely to result from his proposals to restrict smoking in public places, as outlined in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 77; [199466]

(2) what estimate he has made of the change in the proportion of daily smokers in England which will result from his proposals on restricting smoking in public places, as outlined in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 76; and on what research this estimate was based. [199467]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A partial impact regulatory assessment (RIA) has been published, which gives initial estimates of the possible impact on smoking prevalence. A copy is available in the Library.

No estimate has been made of the likely annual change in the number of deaths from second-hand smoke to result from the proposals in the White Paper.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what body has been charged with the development of a tool to assess local health and wellbeing as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 12. [199477]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are working together to commission this development.

Mayday Hospital, Croydon

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the routine waiting times for digital audio equipment at Mayday Hospital in Croydon *(a)* are and *(b)* were 12 months ago. [199517]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mental Health

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the three long-stay hospitals that provide accommodation for people with a learning disability for which closure dates have not yet been agreed. [199621]

Dr. Ladyman: The three long-stay hospitals for which closure dates have not yet been agreed are Little Plumstead, Long Leys Court and Orchard Hill. The "Valuing People" support team is working with health authorities on this programme. The team can be contacted via its website at http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/.

PCT	*Allocation* £	*Total increase* £	
2004-05			
Central Cornwall	188,064	15,891	9.23
East Devon	115,315	9,407	9.88
Exeter	119,043	9,990	9.16
Mid Devon	89,630	7,436	9.05
North and East Cornwall	149,437	12,362	9.02
North Devon	143,972	12,298	9.34
Plymouth	250,372	20,424	8.88
South Hams and West Devon	98,089	8,004	8.89
Teignbridge	103,084	8,409	8.88
Torbay	141,006	12,469	9.70
West of Cornwall	157,833	13,607	9.43
2005-06			
Central Cornwall	204,875	16,811	8.94
East Devon	125,106	9,791	8.49
Exeter	129,608	10,565	8.88
Mid Devon	97,491	7,862	8.77
North and East Cornwall	162,502	13,065	8.74
North Devon	156,979	13,007	9.03
Plymouth	271,630	21,257	8.49
South Hams and West Devon	106,420	8,331	8.49
Teignbridge	111,836	8,752	8.49
Torbay	153,987	12,981	9.21
West of Cornwall	172,199	14,366	9.10

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of children who have been assessed as needing support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are in mainstream education in each region; and if he will make a statement. [199774]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected centrally. A survey by the Office of National Statistics (Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Great Britain, ONS 1999) found that among five to 10 year olds, 10 per cent. of boys and 6 per cent. of girls had a mental disorder. In the 11 to 15 year old age group, the proportion of children with any type of mental disorder was 13 per cent. for boys and 10 per cent. for girls. Mental disorders can range from clinically significant conduct disorders, emotional disorders—such as anxiety and depression—to hyperactivity.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken since 1997 to promote the use of nicotine replacement therapy on the NHS. [199451]

Miss Johnson: We have successfully taken a range of measures to promote the use of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) since 1997, including making all nicotine replacement products available on national health service prescription from April 2001. The effect of these measures is shown in the following table.

Number of prescription items and net ingredient cost of NRT products dispensed in the community in England from 1997 to 2003

	Number of prescription items (thousand)	*Net ingredient cost (£ thousand)*
1997	2.4	35.9
1998	14.9	182.8
1999	21.9	395.9
2000	33.9	702.7
2001	651.7	14,425.6
2002	1,148.3	25,462.5
2003	1,297.4	28,520.5

Source:
Prescription cost analysis data from the Prescription Pricing Authority.

Nocturnal Enuresis

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate his Department has made of the number of children in *(a)* England, *(b)* the South West and *(c)* Dorset who suffer from nocturnal enuresis; what the ratio is of treatment centres to the child population in England; and if he will make a statement; [199759]

(2) how many national health service treatment centres for paediatric continence there are, broken down by region; [199760]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of national health services for paediatric continence; and if he will make a statement. [199761]

Dr. Ladyman: Data on the numbers of children with nocturnal enuresis and national health service treatment centres for nocturnal enuresis and paediatric continence are not collected centrally.

NHS primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for assessing the need for paediatric continence services, commissioning services and for provision of services. In September 2004 we published the national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity services. This is a 10-year programme, intended to stimulate long-term and sustained improvement in children's health by setting standards for health and social services for children.

The NSF directs PCTs to guidance issued in 2000, "Good Practice in Continence Services", which advises that each PCT should have specialist continence services in place. PCTs are also directed to the Modernisation Agency's 2003 publication, "Good practice in paediatric continence services—benchmarking in action".

Nurses

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much it costs the NHS to train a nurse. [199561]

Mr. Hutton: The latest year for which figures are available show that, in 2003–04, the national average cost of tuition to train a nurse over the three years of their course was £19,370. Diploma students would also be entitled to a non-means tested bursary, which in 2003–04 averaged £6,772 per annum.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the number of nurses that have left the UK for employment as a nurse *(a)* in the USA and *(b)* elsewhere in each of the last 10 years. [199641]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) holds information on the number of checks made by overseas regulators that nurses in the United Kingdom are on the NMC register. As these figures show the number of checks made, they will overstate the actual number going abroad each year. This information can be found on the NMC website at www.nmc-uk.org.

Peninsula Medical School

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors are in training at the Peninsula Medical School. [199864]

Mr. Hutton: As at 31 July 2004, there were 302 students studying medicine at the Peninsula Medical School. Intake figures for autumn 2004 are not yet available.

Pharmaceutical Dispensing

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects repeat dispensing from pharmacies will be available in all parts of the country; and if he will make a statement. [199453]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since regulations came into force in May 2003, 89 primary care trusts across the country are able to operate repeat dispensing arrangements.

Repeat dispensing is one of the essential services to be provided by all community pharmacies as part of the new contractual framework for community pharmacy. National roll-out will therefore be in the context of implementing this new framework, which is expected to go live from April 2005. There will be a six month transitional period, so community pharmacies will have until October 2005, to ensure they are in a position to provide this as an essential service in the new contractual framework.

Pregnant Women

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the cost of administering the test for group B streptococcus to pregnant women is in this financial year; [199708]

(2) what assessment he has made of *(a)* the effectiveness and *(b)* the cost of alternative screening tests for group B streptococcus; and if he will make a statement. [199709]

Dr. Ladyman: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the UK National Screening Committee (NSC) have all recommended that routine screening for group B streptococcus (GBS) should not be offered to all pregnant women in the United Kingdom, as there is insufficient evidence that this would do more good than harm.

The NSC is undertaking further work on the prevention of GBS infection in newborn babies. This will include an assessment of the different diagnostic tests. We do not hold information about national health service costs of administering tests for GBS.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will include pulmonary rehabilitation in the payment by results NHS funding tariff; and if he will make a statement. [199431]

Mr. Hutton: In 2005–06, the national tariff will cover all admitted patients—day-cases, elective and non-elective in-patients, out-patients and accident and emergency services unless the services those patients receive are specifically excluded from the scope of the tariff. Rehabilitation, but not specifically pulmonary rehabilitation, is excluded from the tariff where, for admitted patients it takes place in a discrete rehabilitation ward or unit or where, for admitted or out-patients, the activity is coded to specialty 314 (rehabilitation).

Regional Tobacco Control Managers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the post of Regional Tobacco Control Managers is a new position; and what the job description is. [199485]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Since May 2003, regional tobacco control managers have a remit to provide strong leadership on tobacco control across each Government office region, by working with key partners to deliver the goals of the national tobacco control programme, including the coordination and funding of local tobacco alliances. Their roles will now include delivery of the White Paper, "Choosing Health".

Restraint (Children)

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what methods of restraint are approved for use on children in *(a)* hospitals and *(b)* secure hospitals. [200422]

Dr. Ladyman: Guidance on the use of restraint is set out in the Mental Health Act code of practice, paragraphs 19.6 to 19.15. This states that restraint by physical means should take place only as a last resort and never as a matter of course. In addition, the guidance states that any restraint used should: be reasonable in the circumstance; apply the minimum force necessary to prevent harm to the patient or others; be used for only as long as is necessary; and be sensitive to gender and race issues. The advice applies in all healthcare settings and to all age ranges. Trusts should regularly audit their control and restraint procedures consistent with the framework of clinical governance.

Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the findings of the inquiry conducted by Professors Triston and Townsend into waiting irregularities at the Royal National Orthopaedic hospital, with particular reference to the findings concerning Barnet primary care trust; and what assessment he has made of the implications of the findings for the star rating of Barnet primary care trust for 2004–05. [199422]

Dr. Ladyman: I welcome the steps taken by North Central London strategic health authority (SHA) to commission the inquiry and note that arrangements for managing waiting lists are now satisfactory at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.

I understand that in the light of the inquiry, North Central London SHA and Barnet primary care trust have made representations to the Healthcare Commission concerning the impact on 2004–05 star ratings.

Responsibility for calculating performance ratings for 2004–05 is a matter for the independent Healthcare Commission, not the Department

South and West Devon Health Authority

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding was provided for the former South and West Devon health authority area in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2002–03; and what the percentage change was. [199870]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows revenue allocations to South and West Devon health authority (HA) made in 1997–98 and 2002–03 and the increase in percentage terms for 1997–98 and 2002–03.

It is not possible to make comparisons between the allocations made in 1997–98 and 2002–03 as 1999–2000 was the first year unified allocations were made to HAs to cover hospital and community health services, prescribing and general medical services cash limited.

Allocations to South and West Devon HA

Period	*Allocation (£000)*	*Cash increase (percentage)*
1997–98	267,134	3.68
2002–03	499,768	9.42

South West Pensinsula Area

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* total and *(b)* percentage change in funding for each primary care trust in the South West Peninsula Area was between 2003–04 and 2005–06. [199871]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows the total allocations and percentage increase in funding for each primary care trust (PCT) in the South West Peninsula area between 2003–04 and 2005–06.

Allocations to South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority are PCTs 2003–04 to 2005–06

2003–04

PCT	*Allocation £000*	*Total increase £000*	*Percentage*
Central Cornwall	172,173	14,826	9.42
East Devon	105,908	8,856	9.12
Exeter	109,053	9,320	9.35
Mid Devon	82,193	6,941	9.22
North and East Cornwall	137,074	11,526	9.18
North Devon	131,674	11,475	9.55

Allocations to South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority are PCTs 2003–04 to 2005–06

2003–04

PCT	*Allocation £000*	*Total increase £000*	*Percentage*
Plymouth	229,948	19,237	9.13
South Hams and West Devon	90,085	7,506	9.09
Teignbridge	94,675	7,922	9.13
Torbay	128,536	11,618	9.94
West of Cornwall	144,227	12,687	9.65

Speech Therapists

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the *(a)* need for and *(b)* availability of speech therapy at head and neck clinics; and what plans he has to provide dedicated funding for speech therapists at head and neck clinics. [200275]

Dr. Ladyman: No assessment has been carried out centrally.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 1 December 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bass

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the value of commercial fishing for bass in UK inshore waters. [200048]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: Data for the value of commercial fishing for bass in UK inshore waters are not available. However, the total value for landings of bass in 2003 by the UK commercial fleet wherever they fish was approximately £3.2 million.

GM Crops

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what GM crop applications are pending; when a decision on whether they may be added to the National Seeds List is expected; and if she will make a statement. [199440]

Mr. Morley: There are no current GM crop variety applications in the UK National List system.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to support the right of individual countries to implement national bans and safeguard measures in relation to GM crops and food at the 2001/18 Regulatory Committee on 29 November; and if she will make a statement. [200033]

Mr. Morley: Article 23 of Directive 2001/18 provides member states with the right to take safeguard action to restrict or prohibit the use and/or sale of a GMO in their territory if new or additional scientific information becomes available, after the date of consent, that indicates that the GMO constitutes a risk to human health or the environment.

Additional scientific evidence in support of the actions being discussed at Regulatory Committee on 29 November was provided by Greece and Austria earlier this year. The European Food Safety Authority has considered the information provided and concluded that there is no new, scientific evidence, in terms of risk to human health and the environment that would invalidate the original risk assessments. The Advisory Committee on Release to the Environment has also assessed the further information provided and agrees with the EFSA opinion. Defra officials will therefore be voting in support of the Commission Decisions requesting the countries concerned to repeal these measures.

Hazardous Waste Sites

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what directions she has given the Environment Agency with regard to monitoring sites dealing with hazardous waste; and if she will make a statement. [200089]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: None. The Environment Agency regulate hazardous waste landfills in accordance with the requirements of the Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 and other relevant legislation. Other sites dealing with hazardous waste will be subject to the waste management licensing or pollution prevention control regimes.

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment was made of Wingmoor Farm, Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire when deciding which sites should be eligible to deal with hazardous waste; and if she will make a statement. [200090]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The requirements for a hazardous waste landfill are set out in the Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002, as amended by the Landfill (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 and related Pollution Prevention and Control legislation. For those sites, such as Wingmoor Farm, that choose to be designated as hazardous waste landfills, operators had to apply to the Environment Agency for a permit that contained the operating conditions for the site. The agency had to then decide whether a permit should be issued and, if so, what operating conditions would be applied. The Environment Agency is unable to issue a permit unless the necessary planning permissions are in place. I understand that a permit has been issued for Wingmoor Farm.

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the safety implications of the transportation of hazardous waste. [200091]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: Hazardous waste is subject to the controls of the Special Waste Regulations and transport of dangerous goods legislation. Each movement is accompanied by a consignment note and tracked and recorded from the point of production to the place of disposal or recovery. The system is regulated by the Environment Agency and ensures that the waste is transported and dealt with appropriately in order to protect the environment and prevent harm to human health.

Pair Trawling

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to licence pair trawling in British inshore waters. [199823]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: As a result of Defra-funded research which identified a dolphin bycatch problem in the pelagic pair trawl fishery for bass, I announced my intention to prohibit this fishery within 12 miles of the south west coast of England. We are currently considering responses to a consultation exercise on the technical aspects of the

closure before proceeding. Alongside this measure, I announced that I would introduce a licensing scheme elsewhere for UK vessels in this fishery which will be taken forward in the light of responses to the consultation exercise on the 12 mile prohibition.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action is taken to enforce rules relating to pair trawling of British inshore waters by Spanish vessels. [199826]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Under the Common Fisheries Policy, Spanish vessels do not have access rights to UK coastal waters. Any vessels breaching these rules would be liable to prosecution.

Peregrine Falcon

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the size of the peregrine falcon population in the UK; and what the size was *(a)* 10, *(b)* 20 and *(c)* 30 years ago. [199543]

Mr. Bradshaw: Surveys are carried out by BTO, RSPB and conservation agencies.

The most recent UK survey was carried out in 2002 with the number of breeding pairs estimated at 1,402.

(a) In 1991 the number of breeding pairs in the UK was estimated at 1,283.

(b) In 1981 the number of breeding pairs in the UK was estimated at 768.

(c) In 1971 the number of breeding pairs in the UK was estimated at 445.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many positive reactor cattle subsequently proved to be free of tuberculosis in each of the last five years; how their carcase was subsequently disposed of; and how many of them entered the human food chain. [199572]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cattle which react to the tuberculin test are considered to be affected by bovine tuberculosis (TB), regardless of culture results. Bacteriological tests on samples taken from reactor animals are not carried out to validate the skin test results but to identify, for epidemiological purposes, the strain of "Mycobacterium bovis (M. bovis)" responsible for the infection.

Carcases and their associated offal are inspected by the Meat Hygiene Service at slaughter and those with generalised infection are fully condemned and declared unfit for human consumption. Where localised TB lesions are found in more than one organ or area of a carcase the whole carcase is condemned. Carcases with lesions in a single organ or part of the carcase and associated lymph nodes are only passed fit for human consumption once the affected part of the carcase has been cut out and condemned. If no TB lesions are found the carcase is passed fit for human consumption. Any remaining "M. bovis" would be de-activated by thorough cooking.

Once identified as unfit for human consumption, condemned carcases, or parts of carcases, are disposed of in accordance with the relevant Animal By-Products Regulations.

Information on meat condemned from carcases of TB reactor animals is not available in the format requested.

Warm Front

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish the study funded by her Department into health improvements for families and individuals whose homes have benefited from energy improvements under the Warm Front scheme. [199972]

Mr. Morley: The results from the study funded by Defra into health improvements for those whose homes have benefited from Warm Front will be published in academic journals over the course of 2005–06. A summary report will be published on the Defra website.

Waste Management

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she has put in place to permit waste disposal authorities which will be introducing new private finance initiative waste management contracts to suspend fines prior to the full introduction of the contract under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme. [199439]

Mr. Morley: None; under Section 9(2) of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 a waste disposal authority (WDA) automatically becomes liable for a (financial) penalty if the amount of biodegradable municipal waste it sends to landfill in any one scheme year exceeds the amount authorised by the number of landfill allowances it holds for that year. Before that position is reached, however, a WDA will be able to trade or borrow allowances in a six month reconciliation period that follow the end of a scheme year, in order to balance its books. Alternatively, a WDA can make a case to the Secretary of State for her to use her powers to waive a penalty if the reason for the breach was beyond its control.

Wildlife Trafficking

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason secondary legislation has not yet been introduced to give effect to powers authorised in 2003 to *(a)* increase the maximum prison sentence for wildlife trafficking and *(b)* give the police the power of arrest for such crimes; and if she will make a statement. [200653]

Mr. Morley: The powers will be implemented through a Statutory Instrument which will also replace The Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997.

A comprehensive review of these Regulations identified a number of difficult issues. We are now close to resolving these matters and plan to publish a draft Statutory Instrument shortly.

TRANSPORT

A249

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) for what reason the Highways Agency does not remove broken-down vehicles on the A249 Iwade to Queensborough new build; [201041]

(2) if he will make representations to the Highways Agency to request that it remove broken-down vehicles on the A249 Iwade to Queensborough whilst the second crossing of the Swale is being built. [201042]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The Highways Agency and its contractor, Sheppey Route Ltd., do provide a vehicle breakdown recovery service on the 17km length of the A249 between the M2 near Stockbury and Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey, but only in locations where roadworks are in progress.

This ensures that broken-down vehicles and their passengers are removed quickly from roadworks to a place of safety. On sections of road not subject to roadworks, motorists are responsible for organising their own recovery, as they are anywhere else on the network.

Air Quality

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress his Department has made on the joint Public Service Agreement target to improve rural air quality by meeting the National Air Quality Strategy objectives for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1–3 butadiene. [201207]

Mr. Jamieson: In 2002 there were no exceedences of any PSA objective across any of the pollutants included in the air quality PSA in rural areas. This is also the case in 2004 to date.

2003 saw unusually high levels of PM_{10} across the UK with Saharan dust storms, continental particles and continued re-circulation of air contributing to several notable particle pollution episodes. Consequently, in 2003, there were exceedences of the objectives for particles (PM_{10}) at two rural monitoring sites measuring PM_{10}.

In implementing the White Paper, "The Future of Transport", my Department is pursuing measures to ensure that air quality continues to improve across the whole country, including rural areas. We are providing significant resources to support local authorities' local transport plans, which are required to take account of air quality and we are actively encouraging the European Commission to produce tighter proposals for emission standards for new vehicles (Euro standards).

Carbon Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average level of carbon dioxide emitted per kilometre driven was for road traffic in each *(a)* EU and *(b)* G8 country in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [200696]

Mr. Jamieson: The average level of carbon dioxide emitted per kilometre by new cars under official test cycle conditions for the original EU-15 in 2002 is shown in the table. The table includes data for cars sold by European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA) members, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) members, and the Korea Automobile Manufacturers Association (KAMA) members. Together, these three associations account for virtually all cars sold in the EU.

There is no official test cycle for vehicles other than cars and so we do not have data on such vehicles. We also do not have data for the other G8 countries.

Average EU-15 2002 new car CO_2 emissions

Member state	*Average new car CO_2 (g/km)*
Austria	163
Belgium	160
Denmark	169
France	156
Finland	176
Germany	176
Greece	166
Ireland	163
Italy	156
Luxembourg	173
Netherlands	171
Portugal	153
Spain	155
Sweden	197
UK	173

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the robustness of the estimates made for carbon emissions for road transport by the National Environmental Technology Centre. [200897]

Mr. Jamieson: The figures that the National Environmental Technology Centre publish on carbon emissions from road transport are based on internationally agreed emission reporting guidelines which require them to be based on national statistics on fuel consumption. Thus, the figures are as robust as DTI's energy statistics on petrol and diesel consumption in the UK. A very small correction is made for the amount of these fuels used for off-road machinery, for example, lawn mowers, but the relative amounts used for these machines are very small. The allocation of the carbon emissions between different vehicle classes is based on vehicle km data from DfT's national traffic survey and speed-related CO_2 factors for different vehicle types.

Further, the National Environmental Technology Centre emission inventories are subjected to rigorous quality assurance and quality control checking procedures and the data and procedures are reviewed annually by an expert review team of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the relationship between congestion and carbon emissions is factored into the figures for total carbon dioxide emissions compiled by the National Environmental Technology Centre. [200898]

Mr. Jamieson: The effect of congestion on carbon emissions is included in as much as it affects the overall fuel consumption figures the National Environmental Technology Centre use in the calculations. That is, where increased congestion leads to higher fuel consumption then this would be reflected in the DTI fuel consumption figures used for the carbon emission calculations.

Driving Tests (Gillingham)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the targets are for the length of time between receipt of an application for a driving test and the date of the test in Gillingham. [199529]

Mr. Jamieson: *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) has a single appointment availability target for all practical driving test centres of nine weeks from the date the test is requested. The Agency also has a target to maintain a national average car practical test waiting time for six weeks. The current appointment availability at Gillingham is twelve weeks, and DSA is working hard to reduce this.

For theory test appointments, the target is to give 95 per cent. of candidates an appointment at their preferred test centre within two weeks of their preferred date. The performance figure achieved during October 2004 at Gillingham theory test centre was 92 per cent.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who audits the performance of the driving test services at Gillingham against their targets. [199776]

Mr. Jamieson: *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Driving Standards Agency's performance against targets, including those achieved at all driving test centres, is assessed initially by the Agency's Central Operations Branch and Business Planning and Performance Team. Internal auditors from the Department for Transport audit these performance figures, which are published at the end of the financial year in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts. This document is subject to scrutiny by the National Audit Office.

Highways Agency

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the annual budget of the Highways Agency is for 2004–05. [200640]

Mr. Jamieson: The indicative capital and resource budgets of the Highways Agency are identified, in total and by main categories of expenditure, in the agency's published business plan for the year 2004–05, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

M2

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the remaining part of junctions 5 to 6 on the M2 will be resurfaced using a quieter tarmac. [200237]

Mr. Jamieson: *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The remaining section of the M2 between Junction 5 and Junction 6 (Milstead to Faversham) will be resurfaced using a quieter surfacing material in the summer of 2005, subject to funding being available.

The Highways Agency's scheme to resurface the M2 between Junction 5 and Bredgar, using quieter resurfacing materials, has started works and is due for completion before the end of March 2005.

Motor Cycle Safety

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on the wearing of tinted visors as a safety measure by motor cyclists; and if he will make a statement. [200190]

Mr. Jamieson: Following a public consultation in 2002, and after careful consideration, I decided to retain the level of tint for motorcyclists' visors at a minimum 50 per cent. transmittance. However, riders may choose the option of a helmet with a dark internal sun shield provided it is retractable.

Navigational Aids (Republic of Ireland)

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much the Irish Government have agreed to contribute for the Dún Laoghaire project being undertaken by the Commissioners of Irish Lights; and if he will place in the Library a schedule of costs; [200451]

(2) if he will make a statement on the plans for the Dún Laoghaire project being undertaken by the Commissioners of Irish Lights; [200452]

(3) when the Irish Government first agreed to provide funding for the Dún Laoghaire project being undertaken by the Commissioners of Irish Lights. [200457]

Mr. Jamieson: The Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) propose to redevelop their existing site at Dún Laoghaire to become their combined headquarters building and operational base. The project, with an estimated total cost of £14 million, would bring substantial efficiency gains from co-location, and realise some £7 million from the sale of the CIL's current HQ building in central Dublin. CIL has submitted an application for planning permission to the relevant authorities. Detailed design work is not yet complete and so no schedule of costs is available.

The Irish Government confirmed on 26 November that they are ready to contribute 35 per cent. of the cost of the project, starting in 2005. We are now considering the case for sanctioning expenditure from the General Lighthouse Fund for the balance of the costs.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the dates of meetings since January between his Department and the Irish Government on navigational aids in the Republic of Ireland; and who the attendees were at each meeting; [200453]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the 2005–06 value of the subsidy to Light Dues in the Republic of Ireland from the General Lighthouse Fund; and what the projected cost is in 2006–07; [200454]

(3) what the date is for the cessation of payment of subsidies for navigational aids in the Republic of Ireland; [200458]

(4) whether he plans to seek a rebate from the Irish Government for the sums contributed for the Irish Lights from the General Lighthouse Fund in the last financial year. [200459]

Mr. Jamieson: The provision of aids to navigation around the British Isles as a whole is funded by light dues levied on shipping using ports in Britain and Ireland. Because light dues revenue at ports in Ireland is much less than at ports in the UK, there is effectively a subsidy from the UK to Ireland. This can only be calculated retrospectively; and it cannot be estimated until the annual expenditure plans of the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) are agreed. We expect the subsidy will amount to £6.1 million in respect of 2003–04.

This figure is after allowing for the contribution the Irish Government already make to bring receipts from Ireland up to 35 per cent. of the operating costs of CIL, in accordance with a 1985 agreement between the British and Irish Governments. We are working with the Irish Government to renegotiate the 1985 agreement, but cannot set a date when the subsidy might cease. There have been two meetings in 2004, on 26 April and 14 October, between officials of the Department for Transport and of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR). The issue was also raised at a meeting in June between HM ambassador to Ireland and the secretary-general of the DCMNR. We are pressing for more substantive negotiations, involving additionally officials from the Foreign Office and the Northern Ireland Office, to begin in the new year.

Regional Transport Boards

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many regional transport boards there will be; when they will be established; what their budget will be for *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08; and what their (i) composition and (ii) remit will be. [200039]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* We have no plans to establish regional transport boards.

Road Developments

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the major road developments that *(a)* have been agreed and *(b)* are under consideration by his Department within the Greater London area. [200308]

Mr. Jamieson: Under the GLA Act 1999 the strategic road network in London was transferred to Transport for London (TfL) along with responsibility for funding major projects on London borough roads. As a result there are no major road developments within the Greater London area that have been agreed or are under consideration by the Department for Transport.

One road project that has been and will continue to be considered by the Department for Transport is the Thames Gateway Bridge. This is a TfL project where the Government have made a provisional offer of up to £200 million of PFI credits. This offer is subject to the finalisation of an acceptable business and environmental case, a satisfactory financial structure and the granting of all construction and tolling powers.

Road Safety

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made towards fulfilling the European Commission Recommendation on Enforcement in the Field of Road Safety (2004/245/EC). [200632]

Mr. Jamieson: The Recommendation was adopted by the European Commission on 21 October 2003. Since then the UK has participated in an expert group on enforcement in June this year and a meeting of a sub-group on seat belts. Further sub-group meetings on spending and drink-driving are planned. The aim of these groups is to identify common ground, encourage collaboration between Member States and to establish good practice in road traffic enforcement.

Road traffic enforcement was discussed recently at an informal meeting of EU Road Safety Ministers in Verona (October 2004), which I attended. The meeting underlined the importance of enforcement for road safety and the conclusions are due to be considered at a forthcoming meeting of the Transport Council

Vehicle Registration

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles have been registered with a statutory off road notification in each year since 1992. [201203]

Mr. Jamieson: The Statutory Off Road Notification system was introduced in February 1998. The information requested, from that date, is as follows:

	SORN Declarations
1997–98	116,932
1998–99	852,114
1999–2000	1,014,317
2000–01	1,175,199
2001–02	1,421,158
2002–03	1,575,084
2003–04	2,645,878
2004–05[1]	2,171,598

[1] To 31 October

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Circle initiative

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* is planning to take in support of the Circle Initiative and business improvement districts. [200603]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister supports the promotion of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) through our participation on the advisory board of the Circle Initiative, and by providing financial support to the Association of Town Centre Management's National BIDs pilot project, which is developing 22 BID partnerships across England and Wales. These pilots will provide good practice information for the public and private sector on how to set up BIDs.

Local Authority Funding

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Pendle council has received in Government grant in real terms since 1996–97; and what the percentage change since 1996–97 has been in the annual grant. [200993]

Mr. Raynsford: The amount of Government grant made available to Pendle borough council in the period 1996–97 to 2004–05 in real terms is shown in the table.

The figures are derived from data as reported by the local authority, adjusted using the GDP deflator, and consists of outturn data for 1996–97 to 2002–03 and budget data for 2003–04 and 2004–05. The amounts are shown in £000s and have not been adjusted for changes affecting local authorities such as changes in function or financing.

Government grants to Pendle borough council in real terms

	£000
1996–97	8,264
1997–98	7,604
1998–99	7,780
1999–2000	7,843
2000–01	8,111
2001–02	8,541
2002–03	9,071
2003–04	10,230
2004–05	9,629

The grants included are special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) reduction grant, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

The unadjusted percentage increase in annual grant for Pendle since 1996–97 in real terms is 16.5 per cent.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the timing of the introduction of changes to the retirement ages for members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. [200497]

Phil Hope: Amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme to remove provisions that allow some scheme members to retire with unreduced pension benefits before age 65 will come into effect on 1 April 2005.

TREASURY

Civil Service Jobs

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants have *(a)* been relocated and *(b)* been agreed for relocation in the last 12 months; and to which areas of the United Kingdom. [200521]

Mr. Boateng: Progress on delivery of the relocation programme will be announced in the pre-Budget report on 2 December.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the civil service job cuts recommended by the Gershon Review were outside Greater London. [200522]

Mr. Boateng: There will be an overall gross reduction in posts of 84,150 by 2008 and Departments will pursue these reductions in line with business need. Progress will be reported in the Pre-Budget Report on 2 December.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many jobs recommended for relocation by the Lyons Review were also recommended to be cut by the Gershon Review. [200523]

Mr. Boateng: Planned work force reductions in London and the South East are excluded from the 20,000 posts identified for relocation.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200184]

Mr. Timms: Following the Prime Minister's commitment to Parliament on 4 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1456W, the Government will shortly be publishing a comparative analysis of the EU Constitution with existing EU Treaty provisions. This document will address points *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)*. In addition, with regard to points *(b)* and *(e)*, I refer the hon. Member to the Foreign Secretary's reply on 5 July 2004, *Official Report*, columns 592W-93W, to the Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis) setting out moves from unanimity to QMV in the EU Constitution, and to the statement given by the Foreign Secretary on 9 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 133–36W on the Charter of Fundamental Rights. With regard to points *(d)* and *(f)*, the EU Constitution will not in itself determine the quantity of EU legislation, or any costs associated with its implementation. The introduction of a rigorous subsidiarity mechanism involving national parliaments should provide a check on new legislation and help focus it better when it is necessary.

Higher Rate Taxpayers

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many higher rate taxpayers there have been in each county in England in each year since 2000; and what percentage of the total they represent in each case. [200969]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to table 3.11 "Income and tax, by region and country" on the Inland Revenue website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu.htm.

Inland Revenue Staff

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff were employed at the Inland Revenue in *(a)* April 1997 and *(b)* April 2004; what the reasons were for the change in staff numbers; and if he will make a statement. [200249]

Dawn Primarolo: The numbers of staff employed in civil service Departments and agencies, including the Inland Revenue, are available on the Cabinet Office's "Civil Service Statistics" website at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/index.asp.

The effects of changes in departmental responsibilities on departmental staff numbers are also available on the website.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200628]

Mr. Timms: Information relating to the Treasury's payment performance was published in the Treasury's resource accounts for 2003–04 (Paragraph 51 on page 10, HC920), a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. Additional information could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Pensioners (Income Tax)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the number of pensioners living in *(a)* the London borough of Wandsworth and *(b)* Greater London who pay income tax on their income. [200945]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to table 3.12 "Income and tax for individuals aged 65 and above, by region and country" on the Inland Revenue website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu.htm.

Timber

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans his Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of the central point of expertise on timber. [200725]

John Healey: I welcome the establishment of a central point of expertise (CPET) on timber procurement as a valuable source of advice on purchasing timber from legal and sustainable sources for both Government buyers and their suppliers. Clearly, some departments are likely to draw on this resource more heavily than others, and therefore at present my Department does not plan to contribute to the funding of this body.

VAT (Golf)

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received from golfing organisations in Scotland relating to VAT. [201189]

Dawn Primarolo: I am not aware that any Treasury Minister has received representations in the last year from golfing organisations in Scotland relating to VAT.

HEALTH

Chronic Illnesses and Dementia

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of *(a)* chronic illness and *(b)* care for dementia in each of the last three years. [199586]

Dr. Ladyman: The data required to attribute national health service spending to classes of disease with the precision the question seeks are not available. However, the cost of treating and caring for patients with chronic disease, including dementias, is significant and this Government are committed to increasing investment in the NHS year-on-year, so that the needs of these patients and their carers are properly addressed.

That is why, in the 2004 spending review, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, confirmed the sustained high levels of investment that were set in the five-year NHS settlement announced in the 2002 Budget.

This means that, for the period 2003–04 to 2007–08, expenditure on the NHS in England will increase on average by 7.2 per cent, a year over and above inflation. Over the three years 2005–06 to 2007–08, NHS spending will increase on average by 7.1 per cent, a year over and above inflation; a total increase over the period of 23 per cent. in real terms, taking total spend on the NHS in England from £69 billons in 2004–05 to £92 billion in 2007–08.

Dentistry

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects to publish *(a)* the responses to his consultation paper Strengthening the Dental Team, *(b)* the amendments he wishes to make in the light of those responses and *(c)* an Order under section 60 of the Health Act 1999 to implement his conclusions; and if he will make a statement. [199515]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I plan to lay the Order before Parliament, along with a report on the recent consultation exercise, early in 2005. The Order will include amendments made in the light of responses to the consultation.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will commission research into the NHS dentistry service in the Portsmouth City area in order to determine *(a)* levels of access to an NHS dentist and *(b)* levels of resources required to provide an acceptable standard of dentistry provision in the city; and if he will make a statement. [200022]

Ms Winterton: The latest figures available show that in the area covered by Portsmouth City primary care trust (PCT), 49.9 per cent. of adults and 65.9 per cent. of children are registered with an national health service dentist. The PCT has a detailed dental action plan to improve access to dentistry and is actively working with dentists in advance of the new contract to ensure that dental services meet local needs. At a national level, the Department is investing an extra £368 million in NHS dentistry, recruiting 1,000 more NHS dentists in little over a year and reforming the dental system to improve the long-term oral health of the nation.

Disabled People (Direct Payments)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many direct payments were made by each local authority to disabled people in each year from 2001 to 2003. [200642]

Dr. Ladyman: Information showing the number of adults aged 18 and over with physical disability, frailty and sensory impairment receiving direct payments in England and each council with social services responsibilities, for the years 2000–01 to 2002–03, has been placed in the Library.

E-Government

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199630]

Ms Winterton: The Department's website—www.dh.gov.uk—complies with the world wide web consortium's level "A" guidelines for accessibility. This has been confirmed by more than one independent assessor.

The Department's website sits on DotP, the central Government content management platform developed and hosted by the e-Government unit. This platform was developed to comply with United Kingdom Government and industry best practice guidelines on accessibility and has been designed to work with screen readers. We are currently working with the e-Government unit to improve the product's accessibility rating from single "A" compliance to double "A" compliance.

In addition, the Department's website was speech-enabled in September 2004. This facility allows users to download free software which enables them to have the site read aloud. Speech enabling provides an additional way of accessing the Department's content for people who may find it hard to read the website including those with dyslexia or learning difficulties, those for whom English is not their first language, or those with mild visual impairment.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds of FIT magazine, as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 95. [199455]

Ms Winterton: FIT magazine was launched as a pilot scheme in November 2004 with 23 primary care trusts (PCTs). FIT costs PCTs an average of 40 pence per copy. This compares favourably with the cost of advertising or inserting leaflets into men's magazines, which in any case would not offer the same scope for providing tailored local information. The total cost to the national health service was £92,000. The Department subsidised the overall cost of FIT by £175,000, in order to make it more affordable for PCTs.

Leukaemia

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of children under 15 years of age who *(a)* died and *(b)* suffered from leukaemia in each of the last three years who lived (i) within 100 metres of and (ii) over 100 metres away from high voltage power lines. [199609]

Miss Melanie Johnson: No such estimate has been made. The Department has, however, been supporting a study by the Childhood Cancer Research Group at Oxford University of children with leukaemia diagnosed between 1962 and 1995 in relation to their residential proximity to power lines. A summary of the study design is available on the WHO web site at www.who.int/peh-emf.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199649]

Ms Winterton: Seventeen.

At all times Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively before prorogation. However this is not always possible. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Pregnant Women

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many pregnant women were tested on the NHS for group B streptococcus in each of the last three years; [199707]

(2) how many babies were born having contracted group B streptococcus from their mother in each of the last three years; how many of these *(a)* died, *(b)* contracted meningitis and *(c)* contracted other related conditions; and what the cost of treating these babies was in each year; [199710]

(3) what estimate he has made of the cost of providing IV antibodies from the onset of labour to all pregnant women identified as carriers of group B streptococcus. [199711]

Dr. Ladyman: Information relating to the testing of pregnant women for group B streptococcus (GBS) is not centrally available. It is for local clinicians to decide whether to test individual women for this infection. Guidelines have been issued by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), as well as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Data on the number of babies who are born having contracted the infection are not collected centrally. However, a descriptive analysis of cases of GBS infection in which GBS was isolated from blood (bacteraemia) for the year 2003 only, has been published by the Health Protection Agency from routine reports received from microbiology laboratories in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England and Wales, a total of 208 cases of GBS bacteraemia occurred in the first week after birth (early onset) and a further 103 cases of GBS bacteraemia occurred between seven and 90 days after birth (late onset).

A special United Kingdom/Republic of Ireland study of infants up to 90 days old with invasive GBS infection (GBS isolated from a normally sterile site), diagnosed between 1 February 2000 and 28 February 2001 found a total of 377 cases of GBS infection that occurred in the first week of life, 53 of who died.

Following on from the latter study, a further study is being conducted in collaboration with the Oxford perinatal epidemiology group into the economic impact of this infection.

The cost of providing intravenous antibiotics is not currently centrally available. However, this information will be sought as part of the further work that the National Screening Committee is undertaking on this important topic.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the average budget deficit or surplus is for a primary care trust in *(a)* the area covered by the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority and *(b)* England and Wales. [199542]

Dr. Ladyman: Information provided by primary care trusts (PCTs) in the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority area shows they are forecasting an average year-end deficit in 2004–05 of £1.82 million. In 2003–04, the latest year for which audited information is available, PCTs in England made an average surplus of £12,769. Information on matters relating to Wales is a matter for the devolved Administration.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ensure that pulmonary rehabilitation is made available to all appropriate patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in line with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines on the management of COPD in primary and secondary care. [199432]

Dr. Ladyman: It is for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with local stakeholders, to commission local services, taking account of National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines and subject to independent inspection.

The national health service is currently receiving the largest sustained increase in funding in its history. The total of PCT allocations is £45 billion for 2003–04, £49.3 billion for 2004–05 and £53.9 billion for 2005–06. This represents an increase of £12.7 billion, or an average of 30.8 per cent. over the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06.

Smoking-related Illness

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS of treating patients with medical conditions deemed to have been linked to the use of tobacco products was in the last 12 months for which records are available. [199613]

Miss Johnson: Treating illness and disease caused by smoking has been estimated to cost the national health service up to £1.7 billion every year in terms of general practitioner visits, prescriptions, treatment and operations.

Source:

Buck D, Godfrey C, Parrott S, Raw M, University of York Centre for Health Economics: Cost Effectiveness of Smoking Cessation Interventions, London: Health Education Authority, 1997.

HOME

Community Support Officers (Detention Powers)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons the detentions of 31 people under the Metropolitan Police Community Support Officer detention-power pilot resulted in release after the arrival of a police officer; and if he will make a statement. [200357]

Ms Blears: This information is not available because the data were not sought during the evaluation of the use of the detention power in the six pilot forces.

The report "Community Support Officer (Detention Power) Pilot: Evaluation Results" published on 29 September concluded that the evidence collected and analysed in evaluation indicated that the power to detain did not have an adverse effect either on the Community Support Officer or the detainee.

A decision to arrest or take alternative action is at the discretion of the constable who attends the scene. A decision by a constable not to make an arrest does not imply that the decision by the Community Support Officer to detain was incorrect, particularly if the decision to detain results from an individual's failure to comply with a lawful direction by a Community Support Officer.

The Association of Chief Police Officers is developing guidance on the power to detain and how it should be exercised. The guidance will be issued shortly.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether budgets for the National Offender Management Service will be held *(a)* regionally, *(b)* nationally and *(c)* locally. [199983]

Paul Goggins: Different elements of the budget for the National Offender Management Service will be held at national, regional and local level. Individual budgets will operate within the system according to where they will be most effective in helping to reduce reoffending. Most of the funding for offender services will be held by Regional Offender Managers (ROMs), who will be responsible for planning and commissioning those services.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Solicitor-General whether her Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the

World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if she will make a statement. [199685]

The Solicitor-General: The Websites for the Crown Prosecution Service, the Serious Fraud Office and the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers comply with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines' Priority 1 checkpoints. The SFO will be updating its website shortly and will be making improvements to the overall structure.

For the Treasury Solicitor's Department, the website dealing with the Department's bona vacantia matters currently complies with the guidelines, although the website for the Department generally has some minor issues which need to be addressed. These are being addressed as part of the current website development.

The Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate website conforms with the majority of the requirements and a full compliance review will be conducted next year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Broadband National Aggregation Board

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on *(a)* the work and *(b)* the future of the regional broadband aggregation organisations. [200894]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In the light of the significantly changed market conditions for broadband since the set up of the broadband aggregation bodies, the original central co-ordination mechanism is no longer appropriate. In practice the opportunities are regionally based and broadband aggregation will continue to operate at the regional level. Delivery mechanisms will vary across regions, as is the case now. While there will be some cost cutting over the next year, in line with the changed business environment, the specific operations and organisation of each of the individual Regional Aggregation Bodies are governed by their boards, and decisions will be based on their regional needs and opportunities.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will make a statement on her plans for the Broadband National Aggregation Board; [200896]

(2) what funding was provided for the Broadband National Aggregation Board in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement on its future funding. [200895]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: To date, the funding provided to the National Aggregation Body amounts to £571,000. Any future funding will be a collective matter for the National Aggregation Body Executive Board, as will any decisions on its future as a trading entity.

Concessionary Coal

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many former mineworkers or beneficiaries are in receipt of concessionary coal in *(a)* Midlothian, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the United Kingdom. [200207]

Nigel Griffiths: There are 32,434 beneficiaries (as at 1 November 2004) who are in receipt of Concessionary Fuel in the UK. Of these some 1,331 reside in Scotland and, included in that number, are 605 beneficiaries taking solid fuel that live within the Midlothian constituency.

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many former mineworkers or beneficiaries are in receipt of cash in lieu in *(a)* Midlothian, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* United Kingdom. [200210]

Nigel Griffiths: There are 78,440 beneficiaries (as at 1 November 2004) who are in receipt of Cash in lieu of Concessionary Fuel in the UK. Of these some 6,120 reside in Scotland and, included in that number, are 2,532 beneficiaries taking the cash alternative to fuel that live within the Midlothian constituency.

Departmental Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by her Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200385]

Ms Hewitt: My Department does not hold this information centrally. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200405]

Ms Hewitt: My department does not hold this information centrally. To provide this information could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if she will make a statement. [199693]

Ms Hewitt: All of my Department's websites aim to comply with the Guidelines for UK Government websites, which are based on the W3C Guidelines. It is very important that all citizens should have access to Government information and services online, regardless of disability or level of competence and equipment. My Department strives to have a high level of accessibility in all its communications.

Gas Prices

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the rising price of wholesale gas on domestic consumers. [199541]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Initial estimates suggest that, for domestic customers, prices at the end of 2004 are likely to be 18 per cent. higher for gas and 13 per cent. higher for electricity than they were at the start of the year. The impacts of these increases will be greatest for lower income customers. They can be minimised by taking a range of actions. Switching from "home" gas and electricity suppliers can save an average of £50 a year; switching payment method to direct debit can save a further £25. Taking energy efficiency measures can provide significant annual savings, and taking advantage of social programmes offered by energy suppliers including benefits health checks and fixed tariffs, can respectively increase household income and provide greater certainty on payments.

Large Combustion Plant Directive

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to announce how she intends to implement the large combustion plant directive; and if she will make a statement. [200738]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

We are seeking to implement the revised EU large combustion plants directive in a way that will meet its environmental objectives and be as cost-effective as possible for business. As we announced on 22 July, we have therefore decided to explore with the European Commission a modified approach to implementation of the directive that would combine the National Emissions Reduction Plan (NERP) and Emissions Limit Values (ELV) approaches. The UK's reasoned arguments in support of this approach were sent to the Commission on 26 November.

We will take final decisions in the light of the Commission's response, which we expect to receive by March 2005 at the latest.

Research and Development

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how the *(a)* impact and *(b)* success of basic research in the UK is being assessed; and how it will be assessed in the future. [199951]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The Department of Trade and Industry undertakes an international benchmarking study to assess the impact and success of UK research against a comparator group of 26 countries, including the G8 and leading EU nations. The 2004 study shows the continued strong performance of UK science across a number of key scientific indicators including papers published, citations received, number of high impact papers and productivity per unit spend of GDP. A copy of the study "PSA target metrics for the UK research base" is available in the Libraries of the House.

The Department will continue to track progress towards meeting the Government's overall targets outlined in the "Science and Innovation investment framework 2004-14". In particular, progress will be measured against a basket of performance indicators for each of the broad attributes of the UK science and innovation system, as set out in Annex B of the Investment Framework.

Written Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary Session her Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the Session. [199652]

Ms Hewitt: 121. At all times Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively before Prorogation. However this is not always possible and where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this Session.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Republican Sympathisers

9. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many incidents of *(a)* punishment beatings, *(b)* expulsions and *(c)* criminal extortion from the owners of commercial enterprises have been committed by Republican sympathisers over the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [199406]

Mr. Pearson: In the period 1 November 2003 to 31 October this year there have been a total of 40 casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults attributed to Republican groups. No official figures on the number of people exiled from Northern Ireland as a result of paramilitary intimidation are available as not all incidents are reported. The most recent report by the Independent Monitoring Commission on paramilitary activity, published on 4 November, clearly states that Republicans are engaged in criminal extortion.

Belfast City Airport

10. **Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reasons determined the length of the consultation period in relation to Belfast City Airport's application to increase the number of seats for sale. [199734]

Angela Smith: There is no statutory period for this type of procedure. However, we recognise that it is important to be consistent in our approach and we therefore chose to align it with the new Development Plans Regulations, which provide for an eight-week consultation period. This period was recently extended from six weeks to eight weeks and it accords with the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation process.

Devolved Government

11. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on recent discussions held in Northern Ireland on the restoration of devolved government. [199735]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Members for South Antrim (David Burnside) and Edinburgh, West (John Barrett).

15. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on recent talks regarding the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland. [199739]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Members for South Antrim (David Burnside) and Edinburgh West (John Barrett).

Peace Process

12. **Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the peace process. [199736]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Members for South Antrim (David Burnside) and Edinburgh West (John Barrett).

Education Funding

Mr. Trimble: If he will make a statement on the funding of education in Northern Ireland. [199405]

Mr. Gardiner: Since 1999–2000 total Department of Education spending has increased by 48 per cent. per pupil. By the end of the Draft Budget period, that figure will rise to an increase of 76 per cent. per pupil by the addition of £1.86 billion.

In the current year the Department for Employment and Learning allocated £188 million for the further education sector and £217 million for the higher education sector in Northern Ireland.

Employment (Public Investment)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many jobs have been created in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland as a result of public investment in each year since 1997. [200907]

Mr. Gardiner: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

GDP

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the level of *(a)* gross domestic product and *(b)* gross value added per hour worked in the Northern Ireland economy was in (i) 1996, (ii) 1999 and (iii) 2002. [200885]

Mr. Gardiner: The Office for National Statistics is responsible for producing estimates of gross value added (GVA) for the regions of United Kingdom including Northern Ireland. Regional Estimates of gross domestic product are no longer produced since the extension of the European System of Accounts 1995 (ESA95) to the Regional Accounts. Total GVA and GVA per hour worked for Northern Ireland in the requested years is detailed.

	1996	*1999*	*2002*
GVA (£ million)	15,258	17,746	20,497
GVA per hour worked (UK = 100)	86.2	83.4	84.4

Inward Investment

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on inward investment in Northern Ireland. [199562]

Mr. Gardiner: In the period April 2003 to March 2004 Invest NI secured 27 inward investment projects and total investment of £132 million. Of these, 16 were mobile projects from externally owned companies who already had a presence in Northern Ireland. In addition, there were 11 new inward investment projects involving a total investment of £35 million.

Legislation

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what pieces of legislation passed in the last 30 years that the Department is responsible for remain to be brought into force, broken down by year of enactment. [200445]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Providing the information for the period requested would incur disproportionate costs. The following list, therefore, sets out a broad overview of primary legislation from 1997 for which the Northern Ireland Office is responsible and parts of which remain to be brought into force. The list does not include provisions which have never been in force and are now repealed or spent.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998

All in force, apart from

Schedule 13 paras.

1—Minor and Consequential Amendments—Repealed (never in force)

10—Minor and Consequential Amendments—Repealed (never in force).

Sch. 13 paras.

16—Repealed

18—Repealed

Sch. 15—Repeals—Not in force, apart from in cases of exception mentioned in the schedule.

The Police (NI) Act 1998

S 25 (4)—The Board's policing objectives—Not in force

S 40 (3), (4)—Appointment of police reserve trainees—Not in force

Sch. 6—Amendments—Not in force apart from exceptions noted.

The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000

Part V—Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

S 28—Arrangements relating to economy, efficiency and effectiveness—not in force

S 29—Audit of performance plans—not in force

S 30—Examinations—not in force

S 31—Enforcement of duties under section 28—not in force

2001

None.

2002

Justice (NI) Act 2002

Magistrates

Section 9 (12)—Lay magistrates—not in force

Section 10—Transfer of functions of justices of the peace—not in force

Section 11—Transfer of functions of lay panellists—not in force

Lord Chief Justice

Section 12—Role of Lord Chief Justice—not in force

Section 13—Presiding County court judge—not in force

Section 14—Presiding resident magistrate—not in force

Section 15—Presiding lay magistrate—not in force

Section 16—Complaints about holders of judicial office—not in force

Other provisions

Section 18 (10)—Qualification of appointment—not in force

Section 20—Crown Solicitor—not in force

Section 21—Judicial Pensions: pension sharing—not in force

Attorney-General

Section 22—Attorney-General—not in force

Section 23—Terms of appointment of Attorney-General—not in force

Section 24—Removal of Attorney-General—not in force

Section 25—Participation by Attorney-General in Assembly proceedings—not in force

Section 26—Annual report by Attorney-General—not in force

Advocate-General

Section 27—Advocate-General—not in force

Section 28—Functions of Advocate-General—not in force

Public Prosecution Service

Section 29—Public Prosecution Service—not in force

Section 30—Director of Public Prosecutions—not in force

Section 31—Conduct of Public Prosecutions—not in force

Section 32—Discontinuance of proceedings before court appearance—not in force

Section 33—Consents to prosecutions—not in force

Section 34—Police complaints—not in force

Section 35—Information for Director—not in force

Section 36—Exercise of functions by and on behalf of Service—not in force

Section 37—Code for Prosecutors—not in force

Section 38—Equality and non-discrimination—not in force

Section 39—Reports by Director—not in force

Relationship of Director and Attorney-General

Section 40—Superintendence and removal of Director—not in force

Section 41—Transfer of functions etc.—not in force

Section 42—Independence of Director—not in force

Section 43—Appointment and removal of Director by Attorney-General—not in force

Supplementary

Section 44—Interpretation—not in force

Law Commission

Section 50—Law Commission—not in force

Section 51—Duties of Commission—not in force

Section 52—Reports etc.—not in force

Youth Justice—Aims

Section 53 (6)—Aims of Youth Justice System—not in force

New Orders

Section 56—Custody Care Orders—not in force

Other Provisions

Section 63—Extension of youth justice system to 17-year-olds—not in force

Section 64—Juvenile justice centre orders for 17-year-olds—not in force

Section 65—Consultation about detention—not in force

Royal Arms and flags

Section 67—Flying of flags at court-houses—not in force

Community Safety

Section 72—Local Community Safety Partnerships—not in force

Civil Procedure

Section 73—Constitution of Rules Committees—not in force

Court Service

Section 78—Power to abolish Court Service—not in force

Supplementary

Section 82—Excepted matters: judicial office-holders—not in force

Section 83—Reserved matters: new institutions—not in force

Section 84—Assembly Acts about judiciary, law officers and prosecutions—not in force

Schedules

1—Listed Judicial Offices—not in force

2—Judicial Appointments—not in force

3—Appointment to listed judicial offices—not in force

4—Functions of justices of the peace—not in force

5—Transfer of functions to Lord Chief Justice—not in force

7—Functions of Advocate-General—not in force

9—Law Commission—not in force

11—Extension of youth justice system to 17 year olds—not in force

12—Minor and consequential amendments

paras. 1–14—not in force

paras. 18 + 22 Repealed (never in force)

paras. 30, 32–52 not in force

paras. 53 (3), 55 (4), 57, 59–65, 68, 69, 72, 73, 76–81 not in force

13—Repeals and revocations—not in force apart from exceptions.

2003

Police (NI) Act 2003

District Policing Partnerships

S 31—Enforcement of duties under section 28—not in force

Section 15(1)-(5)—Independent members: declaration against terrorism—not in force

Section 16 (1)—Independent members: disqualification—not in force

Police functions and Service

Section 26 (1)-(3)—Protected disclosures by police officers—not in force

Searches and samples

Section 41(1)—Intimate searches—not in force

Section 42 (1)-(5)—Intimate samples—not in force

Schedule 1—Belfast—not in force

Schedule 4—Repeals and Revocations—not in force apart from exceptions

2004

Justice (NI) Act 2004

The Judiciary

Section 2—Membership of the Commission—not in force

Section 3—Duty of the Commission to secure judiciary reflective of the Community—not in force

Section 4—Appointment of Lord Chief Justice and Lords Justices of Appeal—not in force

Section 5—Removal or suspension from listed judicial offices—not in force

Prosecutors

Section 6—Duty of Director of Public Prosecutions to refer certain matters to Police Ombudsman—not in force

Section 7—Influencing a prosecutor—not in force

Criminal Justice Organisations

Section 8—Guidance for criminal justice organisations on human rights standards-not in force

Bail

Section 10—Prosecution right of appeal against grant of bail by magistrates court—not in force

Schedules

1—Transfer to Lord Chancellor of functions relating to Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission—not in force

3—Court Security—not in force

4—Repeals—not in force apart from exceptions.

LMS Scheme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the funding surplus within the LMS scheme was for each school in the South Eastern Education and Library Board in each of the last five years; and how each surplus was used. [200501]

Mr. Gardiner: I understand from the Chief Executive of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board that the funding surpluses and deficits within the Local Management Scheme for each school in the South-Eastern Education and Library Board in each of the last 5 years is set out in the published outturn statements for those years. A table containing the funding surplus for each school for the period in question has been placed in the Library. Information on how each school has been or will be using its budget surplus could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Political Situation

Mr. McGrady: If he will make a statement on the political situation in Northern Ireland. [199737]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Members for South Antrim (David Burnside) and Edinburgh West (John Barrett).

Racist Attacks

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the number of racist attacks in Northern Ireland *(a)* generally and *(b)* with specific reference to attacks on the Chinese community. [199423]

Mr. Spellar: Government are working on many fronts to tackle this problem. Action is being taken at operational and strategic levels by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Government Departments and through funding of the voluntary sector. Government are committed to eradicating all manifestations of hatred, and will be unceasing in their efforts to create a safer and more tolerant Northern Ireland.

The attacks on people from minority communities are unacceptable and to be deplored. They are an issue for all sections of society in Northern Ireland. Some of the recent media headlines would lead observers to the conclusion that Northern Ireland has become a hotbed of racial intolerance. However, this is not the case. It is frequently only the bad news that is reported, not the work going on behind the scenes to promote integration and tolerance. And while crimes have increased significantly over a number of years, I am pleased to report that the rate of increase in the number of attacks appears to be slowing down.

The following table shows the number of racist attacks in Northern Ireland since 2001:

	Number
2001–02	185
2002–03	226
2003–04	453
2004–05 (first six months)	312

The following table shows the number of recorded racist attacks on the Chinese community since 2002:

	Number
2002–03	44
2003–04	100
April 2004 to September 2004	51

Security Situation

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation in Northern Ireland. [199402]

Mr. Pearson: The general security situation is improving. Dissident republicans remain a threat, though for the most part their activities have been thwarted, intercepted or nullified by good policing and intelligence operations.

Worktrack

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to replace the Worktrack programme in Northern Ireland. [200084]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department for Employment and Learning is not planning any direct replacement for the Worktrack programme. There are already significant resources available in a comprehensive provision under the various New Deals and other employment programmes. Significant provision to improve workforce skills is also available through higher and further education.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been placed on the Worktrack programme in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland in each year since 2000. [200903]

Mr. Gardiner *[pursuant to his reply, 30 November 2004, Official Report, c. 63W]:* There was a factual

inaccuracy in the figure provided for the "Number of starts in Northern Ireland—2003–04". The correct information is as follows.

	Number of starts in North Belfast	*Number of starts in Northern Ireland*
1999–2000	43	691
2000–01	203	1,768
2001–02	141	1,880
2002–03	233	2,257
2003–04	255	2,196

PRIME MINISTER

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Prime Minister, how many written questions for his Office were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201557]

The Prime Minister: None.

President Bush

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the actions achieved in 2004 through his diplomatic engagement with President Bush. [200899]

The Prime Minister: As always, during 2004 the UK and US worked closely together on a range of issues including Iraq, Iran, the Middle East Peace process and Afghanistan. I look forward to working with President Bush over the coming months in order to make further progress on these, and other matters.

Sir John Day

Norman Lamb: To ask the Prime Minister, (1) on how many occasions he has *(a)* met and *(b)* spoken to Sir John Day in the last 12 months; what was discussed on each of those occasions; on how many occasions he has (i) met and (ii) spoken to (A) other Ministers, (B) Government officials or (C) other staff of BAE Systems with regard to Sir John Day's appointment to BAE Systems; and what was discussed on each of those occasions; [200510]

(2) whether he had been informed of Sir John Day's role in assessing the causes of the crash of the RAF Chinook HC2 helicopter ZD576 on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994; when he overturned the ruling of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments; and on how many occasions he has overruled the Advisory Committee on business appointments; [200511]

(3) whether he has discussed with Sir John Day his role in assessing the causes of the crash of the RAF Chinook HC2 helicopter ZD576 on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994; [200512]

(4) how he was first informed of Sir John Day's appointment to BAE Systems; and what factors underlay his assessment that it would be in the wider national interest for Sir John Day to take up his post at BAE Systems three months after his retirement from the RAF. [200513]

The Prime Minister: As set out in my letter to the hon. Member on 11 October 2004, copies of which have been placed in the Library, the tragic helicopter accident on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994 played no part in this case. As in previous cases, the procedures and rules governing Business Appointments were rigorously adhered to.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Allergies

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children with severe allergies were denied access to local authority extra-curricular schemes because of the lack of trained staff who can administer adrenaline in the last year for which figures are available. [199757]

Margaret Hodge: My Department does not keep a central record of the number or type of study support (out of school hours learning) activities provided by schools or local authorities, nor of the number of children who attend them. It is for local authorities and schools to determine what provision best meets the needs of the young people in the area.

We encourage schools and local authorities to make study support activities available to all young people who wish to attend. This includes ensuring that all provision incorporates a health and safety policy. The DfES publication "Safe Keeping: a good practice guide for health and safety in study support" provides information on the legal responsibilities of staff, and guidance on first aid requirements. Copies of the publication are held in the Library of the House of Commons.

Connexions (Prisons)

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what work is undertaken by the Connexions service in prisons. [200433]

Margaret Hodge: Connexions is working in secure establishments, chiefly Young Offender Institutes, alongside the Prison Service and youth justice professionals, to deliver support services and personal development opportunities aimed at re-engaging young offenders into education, training and employment. The precise role of Connexions depends on the established support structure in each individual prison and is determined locally.

Early Years Education (Somerset)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of the percentage of three and four-year-olds in early years education in Somerset in each year from 1997 to 2005; and if he will make a statement. [199897]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested. Figures on the provision of early

years education in January 2005 have not yet been collected. The latest available figures for January 2004 show that all three and four-year-olds in England took up some form of early years education. Ninety seven per cent. of these children received funding.

The available sub-national information relates the number of free part-time nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds. The latest figures for the Somerset local education authority area are shown in the table.

Number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year old children in maintained nursery and primary schools and private, voluntary and independent providers—1997–2004

Somerset local education authority area	*Three-year-olds*		
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[1]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[2]	*Total number of three-year-olds*
1997	470	0	470
1998	500	0	500
1999	480	0	480
2000	470	0	470
2001	500	220	720
2002	490	1,900	2,400
2003	430	3,000	3,500
2004	430	[4]3,700	4,100

Somerset local education authority area	*Four-year-olds*		
Position in January each year:	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[3]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total number of four-year-olds*
1997	n/a	n/a	5,200
1998	n/a	n/a	5,700
1999	n/a	n/a	5,500
2000	n/a	n/a	5,900
2001	n/a	n/a	5,400
2002	3,900	[5]1,500	5,400
2003	4,000	[6]1,600	5,500
2004	3,700	[7]1,600	5,300

n/a = not available

[1] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[2] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years census data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census-Supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years census data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.

Final figures for 2004 on the provision for three and four-year-olds were published in a Statistical Release Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway.

Entry to Employment Programme

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the future of the Entry to Employment programme. [200398]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since Entry to Employment (E2E) was first launched in 2003, over 60,000 young people have benefited from the programme. E2E is part of the Apprenticeship family giving a vocational ladder of learning from entry level to higher education.

E2E has an important place in the Foundation level of the14–19 agenda and it will continue to play a key role in the Government's commitment to social inclusion.

Local Partnerships involving Connexions and the local Learning and Skills Councils work together to ensure that E2E and other appropriate entry to level 1 programmes are available for young people.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many places his Department estimated would be taken up by young people on the Entry to Employment programme in each academic year since the programme's establishment; and how many have been taken up. [200399]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been provided for the Entry to Employment programme in each year since its establishment; and what future levels of funding have been allocated. [200400]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list by Learning and Skills Council area the budgets allocated to fund e2e in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [199522]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which Learning and Skills Councils are commissioning European Social Fund bids to replace e2e shortfalls in England. [199523]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Education Maintenance Allowances

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Birmingham, Selly Oak constituency are receiving education maintenance allowances. [200584]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since the start of the academic year, as of 25 November 2004, 8,448 young people in the Birmingham area had received payments under the national EMA scheme. The number is increasing at a steady rate and we expect it to continue to do so. We are unable to provide numbers down to constituency level.

International Student Assessment Study

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which civil servants within his Department have direct responsibility for compiling evidence for submission to the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment 2003 study. [200276]

Mr. Miliband: The Department's contractor for PISA 2003, the Office for National Statistics, was responsible for running the study. None of the data collected in schools passed through the Department. The data went directly to the consortium, led by the Australian Centre for Educational Research, that undertakes PISA 2003 on behalf of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Internet Access (Schools)

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools have broadband internet access. [200745]

Mr. Clarke: 65 per cent. of primary schools and 98 per cent. of secondary schools in England had Broadband Internet access as at October 2004. This equates to 68 per cent. of all schools in England.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards the Government target of having all schools online by 2006. [200746]

Mr. Clarke: 68 per cent. of schools in England (98 per cent. of secondary schools and 65 per cent. of primary schools) have access to broadband as at October 2004. The Government's target is to connect all schools to broadband by 2006. Over 99 per cent. of schools in England had access to the Internet from April 2002.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many different companies supply broadband to schools in England. [200968]

Mr. Clarke: This information is not available as it is not collected by my Department.

Jarvis

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public money will be invested in the investigation into the failure of the Jarvis private finance initiative bid for school building. [200131]

Mr. Miliband: Jarvis was the preferred bidder in the Norfolk grouped schools PFI project. On 8 November Norfolk county council de-selected Jarvis as preferred bidder because it was not able to give the guarantees the council required. Since there is no reserve bidder the project is now on hold. The Department for Education and Skills is working with the council to identify the best way forward.

On the basis of information provided by Norfolk county council my understanding is that the council has commissioned an independent review of the procurement process from the 4ps (public-private partnerships programme). When the review is completed its report will be discussed in an open council meeting towards the end of January next year. I have no information on the possible cost of this exercise, which is not the responsibility of this Department but the responsibility of Norfolk county council.

Programme for International Student Assessment

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what data was omitted from the returns required from his Department by the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment 2003 study. [200927]

Mr. Miliband: PISA is a survey requiring pupils to take tests, and pupils and school staff to complete background questionnaires, rather than data returns from administrative records. All data collected as part of the survey were sent to the OECD by the Department's contractor, the Office for National Statistics. However, school and pupil response rates to the study were lower than those required by the OECD's technical standards for PISA.

Sector Skills Development Agency

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what the *(a)* resource budget, *(b)* staffing levels and *(c)* administration costs of the Sector Skills Development Agency (i) were in each year between 2002 and 2004 and (ii) will be in each year to 2007. [200954]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Sector Skills Development Agency's resource budgets, staffing levels and administration costs for the years from 2002 to 2004 were as shown in the table.

£million

	2002–2003	*2003–2004*
Resource Budget	22.6	49.58
Staffing Levels	37	65
Administration Costs	3.72	4.93

The forecasted figures for the periods to March 2007 are shown in the following table.

£million

	2004–2005	*2005–2006*	*2006–2007*
Resource Budget	69.45	62.36	57.36
Staffing Levels	91.6	89.6	89
Administration Costs	5.87	6.18	6.19

Selection

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what research he has commissioned into the effect of secondary schools using partial selection on the basis of ability on maintained and voluntary schools in the same catchment area. [200893]

Mr. Miliband: We have commissioned no research into this matter, nor are we aware of any other, independent research. However, admissions forums have an important role in reviewing the impact of the admissions systems in their areas. Where a Forum finds that any kind of admission arrangements have a detrimental impact on parents and children, or other schools, it can make recommendations as to how this could be remedied.

Schools, local education authorities and (in the case of partial selection by ability) parents have the right to refer objections about admission arrangements to the independent Schools Adjudicator. The Adjudicator is an independent arbitrator who can rule out or reduce partial selection by ability where he finds in favour of an objector.

Single Sex Schools

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of single sex schools. [199820]

Mr. Miliband: In June 2002 the Department published the National Statistics bulletin Statistics of Education: Pupil Progress in Secondary Schools by School Type in England: 2001.

This contained an analysis of progress made by girls and boys in mixed and single sex non-selective maintained schools between Key stages 2 and 3, and Key stages 3 and 4. Results showed that during Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils in single sex schools on average made slightly more progress than pupils of the same gender in mixed schools. The difference was most marked in English, at around a fifth of a level between Key Stages 2 and 3. There was little difference in mathematics and science. Between Key Stages 3 and 4 girls in single sex schools gained 2 or 3 GCSE points more than girls in mixed schools. There was very little difference in progress for boys. Because the findings were based on a small group of schools the results should be treated with caution. A further study Raising Boys' Achievement conducted by Homerton College at Cambridge University will be published early next year.

A 1999 investigation by the Institute of Education into girls' achievement in single sex schools reported that the good exam results of these schools derived from their high-achieving pupils, and not from their single sex status. The study found that ability, as well as social class and the history and traditions of the schools, had a greater impact on the results girls achieve. The study concluded that there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that single sex schooling is better than co-educational schooling.

Young Mums to be Programme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what arrangements are being put in place to assist the Young Mums To Be programme following reductions in e2e funding; in what form this assistance is being given; and for how long it will be given in this form. [199524]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Young People

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people were consulted by his Department on the role of the Children's Commissioner; and what the age-range was of those consulted. [200360]

Margaret Hodge: The Department for Education and Skills has established an advisory Children and Youth Board (C&YP) comprising 25 children and young people between the ages of 11 to 19. It includes members with experience of homelessness, foster care, supported living, children's homes and parenthood, as well as children and young people with disabilities (including physical and learning disabilities), and comprises representatives of both urban and rural areas and of differing ethnic backgrounds.

Members of the board and other children and young people recently helped to draw up a person specification and job advertisement for the Children's Commissioner, and will in due course be involved in assessing applicants for the post.

In addition to the members of the board, a number of participants were consulted on the role of the Commissioner in face-to-face workshops as part of the "Every Child Matters" consultation exercise, which involved 600 children and young people.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199632]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The DFID website (www.dfid.gov.uk) has been redesigned and relaunched in August 2004 to comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and Cabinet Office's e-government Unit guidelines.

Every HTML page that is published on dfid.gov.uk is checked using Bobby web accessibility checking software. Pages are only published when there are no errors at Priorities 1, 2 or 3. Priority 3 is the highest level of conformance and the fact that we use this as standard shows how committed DFID is to providing for people with disabilities.

Website development is ongoing and we hope to continue improving the way in which we provide information for users with disabilities in the next year. DFID Website and Intranet Teams will receive training from the RNIB early in 2005 with a view to ensuring that they maintain their understanding of accessibility issues.

Priorities for improvement in 2005

1. Departmental sites

We have two stand alone departmental sites DFID Bangladesh (http://www.dfidbangladesh.org/) and DFID India (http://www.dfidbangladesh.org/) which do not meet basic accessibility standards. We aim to integrate these into the main dfid.gov.uk within the next 12 months.

2. Publications

We aim to make our publications more accessible by improving the way that we publish PDF documents, and also by providing material in alternative formats.

Developing Countries (Debt)

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much the UK's share is of the remaining debt owed by developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [199546]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK has committed to paying our share of multilateral debt service costs to IDA (the concessional lending arm of the World Bank) and the African Development Fund for all countries that have completed the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and all other IDA-only countries with robust public expenditure management systems. We have calculated our share to be 10.14 per cent. based on our burden share from the last replenishment round of IDA.

Energy Efficiency

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress the UK Government has made towards implementing commitments made at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development to increase the availability of renewable energy sources and promote measures to improve energy efficiency under the *(a)* REEEP Programme of Work, *(b)* Export Credits Guarantee Department Renewables Initiatives Process and *(c)* Global Village Energy Partnership; and if he will make a statement. [200655]

Mr. Gareth Thomas *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The energy commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) include action to improve access to reliable and affordable energy services as well as to increase the use of renewable energy and to promote the more efficient use of energy. The UK, through the work of several Government Departments, is actively following up on these commitments, including those referred to in the question.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) was announced at the WSSD and launched in London in October 2003. The international secretariat, initially within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), moved to Vienna in the summer of 2004, where it was established with a full-time manager and staff. In addition, five regional REEEP secretariats have been set up in various parts of the world. In addition to core funds provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the FCO Global Opportunities Fund has provided £2 million for projects. Other contributing partners include Austria, Germany, Italy and the US. REEEP is working with other WSSD partnerships, including the Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP).

The Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) Renewable Energy Initiative, also announced at the WSSD, is to support UK exports of renewable energy technologies, providing up to £50 million of cover each year. Marketing of the initiative is a joint effort of the Department for Trade and Industry and the ECGD. Renewable energy exports to emerging markets take time to develop and there has been no take-up of the facility by UK exporters to date. However, the cover remains available and will continue to be promoted by ECGD officials and DTI trade promoters.

The Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP) seeks to improve access to energy in developing countries, in support of economic and social development and poverty reduction. It promotes all technology options, including renewable energy where appropriate. The secretariat is hosted by a leading UK-based international NGO, with a full-time manager funded by the World Bank. GVEP has attracted over 400 partner organisations globally. A major part of its interest is to improve access to energy in Africa. DFID has provided £700,000 core funding and the full-time input of an energy expert. Other contributing partners include five EU member states, the UN Foundation, the US Agency for International Development and the United Nations Development Programme. DFID is actively encouraging GVEP and REEEP to work together, and with other energy access initiatives such as the EU Energy Initiative.

Ethiopia

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department plans to lead the Ethiopia country dialogue as part of the European Water Initiative. [200924]

Mr. Gareth Thomas *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: DFID does not intend to lead the Ethiopia country dialogue under the EU Water Initiative but is intending to strengthen the capacity of the EC delegation in Addis Ababa to take the lead on the policy dialogue and the administration of the EU Water Facility.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200177]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 10–11W.

European Water Initiative

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the performance indicators for the European Water Initiative; and which of these have been achieved. [200114]

Mr. Thomas *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The EU Water Initiative aims to improve coordination of EC and EU member states' development expenditure on water and sanitation, focusing on water resource management as well as service delivery.

The EU Water Initiative was launched in 2002 in Johannesburg, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The initiative was signed by the Presidents of South Africa, Nigeria and the European Commission, and by the Secretary-General of the UN.

The monitoring working group of the EU Water Initiative is in the process of developing a number of performance indicators around the following outputs:

improved coordination with other EU member states in managing development funding provided for water and sanitation;

advance the knowledge within the EU on the management of financing for developing countries in the water and sanitation sector;

create new, and improve existing, partnerships between donors, the public sector, private sector investors and NGOs; and

increase the resources provided to the water and sanitation sector in developing countries.

It is too early in the process to identify whether the EU Water Initiative has achieved these outputs.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to provide additional resources to the Finance Working Group of the European Union Water Initiative in order to implement their commitment to the Water Action Plan. [200115]

Mr. Gareth Thomas *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The Department for International Development (DFID), chairs the Finance Working Group of the European Union Water Initiative and provides financial expertise to the Working Group. In addition, DFID supports all aspects of the EU Water Initiative through the secondment of a sector specialist to the European Commission and through the provision of expertise to other Working Groups. Over this financial year DFID will have spent £150,000 on the EU Water Initiative, and has budgeted for the same amount for the 2005–06 financial year.

Haiti

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what measures the United Kingdom is taking to support the Government of Haiti in stopping environmental degradation in that country. [199847]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) for Haiti is the basis for a coordinated national reconstruction and development programme for Haiti, including both short and medium-term priority needs. The ICF includes a programme for the environment that aims to promote alternative energy sources to replace wood and charcoal; to fight against degradation of land and key natural resources; and to promote sustainable and integrated disaster risk management through the implementation of the National Plan for Disaster and Risk Management.

The UK is supporting the environmental measures outlined in the ICF through its contributions to the European Commission, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank who are financing efforts in this area. The EC has pledged US$3 million for environmental programmes in the ICF, and the IDB and World Bank have pledged US$105 million and US$44 million in unallocated funds to the broad economic recovery section of the ICF, some of which may be used to finance environmental programmes.

The UK will continue to engage with its partner multilateral institutions in order to ensure that the development assistance relating to the environment in Haiti, and all other sectors, is delivered effectively and efficiently, and that the voices and needs of the poor are included and addressed.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the UK made a contribution to bi-lateral assistance in Haiti during the meeting of donor countries in Washington in July. [199848]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK did not make a bilateral contribution to assistance in Haiti during the Donor Conference held in July 2004. However, donor pledges totalled over US$1 billion, exceeding the US $924 million requested to finance Haiti's needs outlined

in its Interim Cooperation Framework for 2004–06. The funds pledged included significant contributions from the following multilateral institutions supported by the UK Government:

European Commission—US$ 288 million

Inter-American Development Bank—US $263 million

World Bank—US $155 million.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans the Government have to support efforts to bring peace and prosperity to Haiti. [199849]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) sets out a comprehensive plan to promote peace, prosperity and overall development in Haiti, and covers four broad areas:

Political Governance and National Dialogue;

Economic Governance and Institutional Development;

Economic Recovery; and

Access to Basic Services.

DFID is contributing indirectly to the Interim Cooperation Framework through its contributions to the European Commission, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, who have pledged assistance to the ICF as follows:

European Commission—US$ 288 million

Inter-American Development Bank—US $263 million

World Bank—US $155 million.

DFID will continue to engage with its multilateral and bilateral donor partners to ensure that the development assistance under the ICF is efficient and effective, and that the needs of poor people are adequately addressed.

DFID will also continue to support civil society organisations working in Haiti through the Small Grants Scheme, the Civil Society Challenge Fund and the Partnership Programme Agreements for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will second staff from his Department to work in the European Commission's delegation to Haiti. [199850]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID currently has no plans of seconding staff to work in the European Commission's delegation. DFID's engagement with the Commission on Haiti will continue to be managed by the European Union department, in collaboration with DFID Caribbean.

DFID will continue to engage in Haiti through our contributions to the key multilateral institutions operating in Haiti, including the UN, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, as well as the EC. We will also continue to support civil society organisations operating in Haiti through our Small Grants Scheme, Civil Society Challenge Fund and Partnership Programme Agreements.

Russian Federation (Children)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent support he has given to projects in the Russian Federation aimed at improving facilities for *(a)* street children, *(b)* orphans and *(c)* children with disabilities; what his plans are in this area; and if he will make a statement. [200143]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I refer the hon. Member to my response to his previous question dated 20 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 738W.

Water and Sanitation

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to monitor the success of its dialogue with main partner governments who have not prioritised water and sanitation in their poverty reduction strategy papers. [200608]

Mr. Gareth Thomas *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The Department of International Development (DFID) works with partner governments, respecting choices made at the country level, including priorities set within poverty reduction strategies. Where these do not include sectors or issues that DFID regards as high priority, DFID addresses this through reviews of poverty reduction strategies, and through support to strengthen policy analysis and dialogue. Opportunities for monitoring arise in particular during annual reviews of Poverty Reduction Strategies, World Bank and International Monetary Fund reviews, budget and public expenditure reviews, and during the preparation of subsequent Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Yasser Arafat (Estate)

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the amount of funds in US dollars which originated from *(a)* United Kingdom bilateral aid and *(b)* aid from the European Union held by the estate of the late Yasser Arafat; and if he will make a statement. [199584]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There is no evidence which indicates that either UK bilateral or European funds are held by the estate of President Arafat. Until this year the majority of DFID's bilateral programme expenditure has been technical assistance, channelled directly through international and local managing agents, not the Palestinian Authority (PA). In 2004 DFID contributed bilaterally to the PA budget through the World Bank Public Financial Management Reform Trust Fund. Since 2000, the European Commission has provided budget assistance to the PA in addition to its technical assistance programme. This money has been managed directly by the Ministry of Finance with no involvement of the President's Office.

The International Monetary Fund reported last year that during the period 1995 to 2000, there was a diversion of £560 million of revenue from the Palestinian Authority budget to a special bank account controlled by President Arafat. There was no suggestion that this money had been "misused"—and that the large majority of these funds had been invested in assets that are still within the public domain. The IMF report highlighted the significant progress that has been made

over the last two years in improving accountability and transparency. Allocations from the PA budget to the President's Office have been drastically reduced.

SCOTLAND

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200174]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on 29 November, *Official Report*, column 10–11W.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201558]

Mrs. McGuire: None. All the Office's outstanding written questions were answered before prorogation.

DEFENCE

Asset Tracking

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in establishing a system of asset tracking for defence logistics. [199830]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has employed two consignment tracking systems since the first Gulf War; Royal Naval Invoicing and Delivery System (RIDELS) for the Royal Navy and Visibility in Transit Asset Logging (VITAL) for the Army and RAF. VITAL was subsequently enhanced by the acquisition of the US system Total Asset Visibility (-) (TAV (-)) as an Urgent Operational Requirement in January 2003. This has automated much of the process and improved performance. We are now investing additional money on enhancing these systems still further. This will include, for example, the full integration of TAV (-) into existing consignment tracking systems.

Battlefield Digital Information

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of *(a)* Major J. A. Kennedy's presentation Real-Time Exchange of Battlefield Digital Information, given at the SMI Conference Joint Battlespace Digitisation on 20 May 2003, *(b)* Wing Commander Mike Longstaff and Squadron Leader R. K. Dyson's presentation Flying Training, given at the SMI Conference Fighter Trainer on 2 June 2003, *(c)* Sym Taylor's presentation Effective Management of Spares, given at the SMI Conference Military Spares and Inventory Management on 16 June 2003, *(d)* Lieutenant Colonel Chris Barkes and Wing Commander Chris Otley-Doe's presentation Effective and Efficient Control of Material Flow, given at the SMI Conference Military Spares and Inventory Management on 16 June 2003 and *(e)* Lieutenant Commander Charles Jewitt's presentation on the Joint Modular Storage Concept, given at the SMI Conference Military Spares and Inventory Management on 17 June 2003. [199827]

Mr. Ingram: The following presentations are held within the Ministry of Defence and will be placed in the Library of the House:

Sym Taylor's presentation on the Effective Management of Spares.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Barkes and Wing Commander Chris Otley-Doe's presentation on the Effective and Efficient Control of Material Flow.

Lieutenant Commander Charles Jewitt's presentation on the Joint Modular Storage Concept.

The other presentations are no longer held in the Ministry of Defence, although they may be available from SMI Group.

Certain Conventional Weapons Convention

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the UK to ratify Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. [200295]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom intends to ratify Protocol V at an early opportunity.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the countries which have ratified Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; what action he has taken to encourage others to sign the protocol; and if he will make a statement. [200299]

Mr. Ingram: Lithuania, Sierra Leone and Sweden have so far ratified Protocol V. The United Kingdom continues to urge all states to ratify Protocol V as soon as possible.

Cooneen Watts and Stone

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which elements of the Department's cut and sew contract with Cooneen Watts and Stone Ltd. have been satisfied to date. [200743]

Mr. Ingram: This contract covers a wide range of deliverables, many of them not due to commence until early 2005. The supplier has achieved delivery obligations agreed to date.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from honourable Members and *(b)* for the officials in his Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [200806]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence aims to respond to all correspondence within 15 working days of receipt.

Defence Contracts

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the date of contract signature was for the (*a*) Support Vehicle, (*b*) Light Forces Anti-Tank Guided Weapon Systems, (*c*) Next Generation Anti-Armour Weapon and (*d*) TERRIER projects. [199831]

Mr. Ingram: The Demonstration and Manufacture contract signature dates are as follows:

(a) Support Vehicle - It is anticipated that contractual negotiations with MAN ERF UK Ltd., the Preferred Bidder for the Support Vehicle Project, will be concluded by spring next year.

(b) Light Forces Anti-Tank Guided Weapon - 7 February 2003.

(c) Next Generation Light Anti-Armour Weapon - 28 June 2002.

(d) TERRIER - 19 July 2002.

Departmental Account Codes

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's account codes. [199832]

Mr. Ingram: Yes.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of refurbishing each Ministerial Private Office was in the last two years. [200802]

Mr. Caplin: The offices in the Old War Office occupied by Defence Ministers from 2001 to July 2004 to allow the redevelopment of the main building have not been refurbished in the last two years. The element of the cost of the main building redevelopment which relates directly to ministerial offices is not separately identified in the contract and cannot therefore be established with accuracy.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199625]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence is undertaking a programme of work to ensure that its internet websites comply with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. We take seriously our accessibility commitments and are striving to ensure that we deliver fully accessible services to the public on the internet and elsewhere.

EU Military Staff

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many EU Military Staff there are, broken down by (*a*) rank and (*b*) nationality. [200382]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: On 16 November 2004 the EU Military Staff comprised 147 people. The following table gives a breakdown of this figure in terms of nationality and rank. The UK Army equivalent rank is given in brackets where appropriate.

	Rank						
Country	1* (Lt Gen)	2* (Maj Gen)	1* (Brig)	OF-5 (Col)	OF-4 (Lt Col)	OF-4/3 (Lt Col)	OF-3 (Maj)
Austria				1		3	
Belgium		1		1	2	2	
Cyprus							1
Czech Republic						2	
Denmark				1			
Estonia						1	
Finland				1		3	
France	1			2	2	5	
Germany		1		1	5	5	
Greece				2	1	5	
Hungary						2	
Ireland			1	1		2	
Italy				1	1	6	1
Lithuania						1	
Luxembourg					1		
Netherlands				2	1	3	
Poland					1	3	
Portugal			1			3	
Slovakia					1	1	
Spain				1	2	5	
Sweden			1	1	2	3	
United Kingdom		1	1	2	5	5	
Total	1	2	4	17	24	60	2

	Rank			Civilian			
Country	OF-2 (Capt Lt)	OR-5 8 (NCO)	A (Legal adviser)	B (Admin assistant)	C (P.A. Secretary)		Total
Austria							4
Belgium		3		1	4		14
Cyprus							1
Czech Republic							2
Denmark							1
Estonia							1

Country	Rank OF-2 (Capt/Lt)	OR-5/8 (NCO)	Civilian A (Legal adviser)	B (Admin assistant)	C (PA/Secretary)	Total
Finland	–	1	–	–	2	3
France	1	4	–	–	1	16
Germany	–	1	–	–	–	13
Greece	–	–	–	–	–	8
Hungary	–	–	–	–	–	2
Ireland	–	1	–	–	–	3
Italy	–	2	–	–	1	12
Lithuania	–	–	–	–	–	1
Luxembourg	–	–	–	–	–	5
Netherlands	–	–	1	–	–	7
Poland	–	1	–	–	–	5
Portugal	–	1	–	–	–	5
Slovakia	–	–	–	–	–	2
Spain	–	1	–	–	1	10
Sweden	–	2	–	1	2	12
United Kingdom	–	3	–	–	2	18
Total	1	20	1	2	13	147

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what has been the cost in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [200812]

Mr. Ingram: In line with policy and practice in other Government Departments, the Ministry of Defence does not record separately those cases brought against the Department raising issues under the Human Rights Act 1998. Human rights are now integrated in the general law and are rarely the sole basis for a challenge.

The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Lost Flying Hours

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list *(a)* the average flying hours lost per month at airbases in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Scotland and *(b)* the flying hours per month lost due to bad weather at (A) RAF Waddington, (B) RAF Lyneham and (C) RAF Brize Norton in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [200269]

Mr. Ingram: Records of the average flying hours lost per month at airbases are not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The Ministry of Defence does not hold records of flying hours lost owing to bad weather. The following table presents the total number of lost flying hours by month since January 2001 at RAF Waddington, RAF Lyneham and RAF Brize Norton when conditions were assessed as red. Red conditions are defined as when visibility is less than 800 metres or the cloud base is less than 200 ft above ground level. In these conditions, flying is unlikely to take place. Other weather conditions, for example high winds and turbulence, might also preclude flying but their incidence is not recorded.

RAF Waddington Month	Red Conditions (Hours)	RAF Lyneham Month	Red Conditions (Hours)	RAF Brize Norton Month	Red Conditions (Hours)
2001		*2001*		*2001*	
Jan	104:00	Jan	27:00	Jan	30:00
Feb	69:00	Feb	57:00	Feb	46:00
Mar	42:00	Mar	31:00	Mar	16:00
Apr	8:00	Apr	6:00	Apr	6:00
May	10:00	May	5:00	May	4:00
Jun	3:00	Jun	0:00	Jun	0:00
Jul	2:00	Jul	16:00	Jul	5:00
Aug	3:00	Aug	14:00	Aug	16:00
Sep	20:00	Sep	12:00	Sep	12:00
Oct	46:00	Oct	14:00	Oct	23:00
Nov	14:00	Nov	23:00	Nov	10:00
Dec	70:00	Dec	59:00	Dec	37:00
2002		*2002*		*2002*	
Jan	79:00	Jan	66:00	Jan	68:00
Feb	27:00	Feb	18:00	Feb	17:00
Mar	23:00	Mar	2:00	Mar	9:00
Apr	5:00	Apr	10:00	Apr	8:00
May	16:00	May	3:00	May	4:00
Jun	13:00	Jun	13:00	Jun	0:00
Jul	9:00	Jul	7:00	Jul	0:00
Aug	39:00	Aug	4:00	Aug	3:00
Sep	10:00	Sep	8:00	Sep	6:00
Oct	28:00	Oct	17:00	Oct	1:00
Nov	145:00	Nov	47:00	Nov	60:00

RAF Waddington		RAF Lyneham		RAF Brize Norton	
Month	*Red Conditions (Hours)*	*Month*	*Red Conditions (Hours)*	*Month*	*Red Conditions (Hours)*
Dec	100:00	Dec	104:00	Dec	63:00
2003		*2003*		*2003*	
Jan	43:00	Jan	13:00	Jan	12:00
Feb	26:00	Feb	31:00	Feb	13:00
Mar	34:00	Mar	28:00	Mar	14:00
Apr	12:00	Apr	7:00	Apr	7:00
May	0:00	May	0:00	May	2:00
Jun	1:00	Jun	6:00	Jun	1:00
Jul	7:00	Jul	6:00	Jul	0:00
Aug	9:00	Aug	3:00	Aug	0:00
Sep	4:00	Sep	2:00	Sep	6:00
Oct	4:00	Oct	11:00	Oct	0:00
Nov	58:00	Nov	38:00	Nov	27:00
Dec	74:00	Dec	57:00	Dec	33:00
2004		*2004*		*2004*	
Jan	10:00	Jan	12:00	Jan	2:00
Feb	4:00	Feb	2:00	Feb	4:00
Mar	17:00	Mar	24:00	Mar	12:00
Apr	8:00	Apr	1:00	Apr	1:00
May	13:00	May	9:00	May	4:00
Jun	1:00	Jun	1:00	Jun	0:00
Jul	8:00	Jul	8:00	Jul	0:00
Aug	32:00	Aug	17:00	Aug	9:00
Sep	10:00	Sep	5:00	Sep	2:00
Oct	47:00	Oct	25:00	Oct	8:00

Note: The figures have been recorded over a full 24 hour period because the stations remain open round the clock.

Red Reflection

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the ability of the successful contractor to meet deadlines for the supply of Red Reflection clothing and other camouflage combat garments. [200045]

Mr. Ingram: Delivery of combat clothing items is not due to commence until early next year. The contractor is on target to meet the required delivery dates and to deliver items to specification, which includes meeting the required Infra Red Reflective standard.

Royal Irish Regiment

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his policy that the Home Service part-time officers and soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment are deemed to be casual workers for the purposes of pension provision; and if he will make a statement. [200349]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Home Service part-time soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment have been charged since 1 July 2000 under section 69*(a)* of the Army Act 1955 for failure to attend a duty; and what punishments were awarded in each case. [200350]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: It would not be possible to ascertain whether soldiers were charged for failure to attend duties under section 69*(a)* of the Army Act 1955 except at disproportionate cost but failing to attend a duty would normally be dealt with under section 29A*(a)* and not 69*(a)* of the Army Act 1955.

Figures are only available from 1 October 2000 onwards but from that date until the 19 November 2004 eleven Part-Time members of the Home Service Battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment were dealt with summarily under section 29A*(a)* for failing to attend a duty.

Individual punishments are a personal matter between the Commanding Officer and the soldier in question but the penalties in these cases ranged from fines to restriction of privileges.

Runway De-icing Chemicals

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who supplies the RAF with runway de-icing chemicals; and how much the contract was worth in each of the last three years. [199839]

Mr. Ingram: The current suppliers of runway de-icing chemicals are Verdugt BV from Tiel in the Netherlands who supply de-icer and Univar Ltd. of Middlesbrough who supply icing preventer. The combined value of these enabling contracts is approximately £1.5 million pounds per annum.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether shortages have been experienced in runway de-icing chemicals for RAF and other service airfields; and if he will make a statement. [199857]

Mr. Ingram: There are no shortages of runway de-icing chemicals for RAF or other Service airfields. In February this year the current supplier of runway de-icing chemicals to the Ministry of Defence was unable to meet the required delivery date for a demand from an RAF airfield. The demand was satisfied by an alternative supplier.

UK Eurofighter

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the latest cost of the UK Eurofighter above the original estimate is. [200121]

Mr. Ingram: As set out in the recently published National Audit Office Report on Major Defence Projects (HC1159–1 session 2003–04 dated 10 November), the latest cost to the United Kingdom of the Eurofighter Typhoon programme is £2,343 million above the original estimate which was produced in 1987 before development began.

Uniforms

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether uniforms made in China have been issued to service personnel. [200505]

Mr. Ingram: Uniform items, such as berets and Norwegian Shirts, have previously been made in China and issued to service personnel. In terms of the recent contract award for cut and sewn items to Cooneen Watts and Stone Ltd, the uniform element of the contract is not due to commence delivery until early 2005. No uniform procured under this contract have therefore yet been issued to Service personnel.

Warship Command Systems

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what risk assessments were made on the proposal to run the command systems for future Royal Navy warships on the Microsoft Windows operating system; what other options were considered; what benefits Windows has over the other options; and if he will make a statement. [200036]

Mr. Ingram: The Type 45 prime contractor, BAE Systems, and its sub-contractor, are responsible for selecting an operating system that meets the requirements placed on them by the Defence Procurement Agency. However, industry's decision to use Windows 2000 was also the subject of a review conducted by the Ministry of Defence which included specialist representatives from QinetiQ and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory. The review concluded that the choice of Windows 2000 presented the lowest risk of the available options. The contractor considered that there were only two credible choices of accredited operating system: Windows 2000 from Microsoft and a Unix based solution, Solaris from Sun. While the Unix option was considered technically viable, the decision to use Windows 2000 was taken as it was considered to minimise the risks for long-term support.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Council Funding

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding the Arts Council has given to theatre in each of the last three years; and what proportion of total Arts Council funding this constituted in each year. [200630]

Estelle Morris: The following table shows the Arts Council's funding commitments to theatres over the last 3 years, also expressed as a percentage of their total grant-in-aid spending on all artforms.

	Total ACE Spend on Theatre (£)	*Theatre spend as a proportion of ACE spending (percentage)*
2002–03	74,629,940	33
2003–04	89,566,873	35
2004–05	95,601,602	34

Athletics

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with UK Sport on the funding formula for performance athletes. [200662]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* Ministers and officials maintain an on-going dialogue with UK Sport about funding for elite athletes. Following the Sports Cabinet meeting in April this year, Ministers collectively agreed the funding package to be provided to our elite athletes through UK Sport's World Class Performance programme for the Beijing Olympic/Paralympic cycle. It is a matter for UK Sport, however, to devise the detailed formula to allocate this funding package to individual sports.

Commonwealth Institute Building

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will place in the Library *(a)* the report she commissioned from English Heritage on the de-listing of the Commonwealth Institute building in Kensington and *(b)* related correspondence between ministers and officials of her Department and English Heritage. [200225]

Mr. Caborn: The information is as follows:

(a) This report has not yet been received. I will place it in the Libraries of both Houses once the Secretary of State has taken her decision on whether or not this building should be de-listed.

(b) There has been no such correspondence other than the standard pro-forma commissioning English Heritage's advice.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 27 September. [200322]

Mr. Caborn: I apologise for the delay in responding. The letter concerned an application to list a telephone box under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This matter is still being considered by English Heritage and has been delayed as English Heritage have been considering possible amendments to the criteria for listing telephone boxes. They expect to be able to provide their advice to this Department in December and a decision will be made very shortly after that. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as the decision has been taken.

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 21 October. [200323]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Minister for Media and Heritage replied to the hon. Gentleman on 25 November.

The letter of 21 October was not received in the Department until 25 November 2004, and was replied to immediately.

Cricket

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what agreements made by her Department govern negotiations for new television rights for *(a)* international and *(b)* first-class cricket. [200661]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: The Government intervenes in the sports broadcasting market only to ensure that viewers have access to those sporting occasions which are considered to have true national resonance. These events are listed under Part IV of the Broadcasting Act 1996.

Cricket test matches played in England are listed as Group B events as are the final, semi-finals and matches involving Home Nations teams in the Cricket World Cup. Exclusive live coverage of Group B events is permitted on subscription channels provided that delayed coverage or highlights have been offered on fair and reasonable terms for transmission on BBC1, BBC2, ITV1 or Channel 4.

Other international cricket matches and first class cricket matches are not included on the list.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the England and Wales Cricket Board on the England cricket tour to Zimbabwe. [200361]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: Neither the Secretary of State or I have had any recent discussions with the England and Wales Cricket Board about the England cricket tour of Zimbabwe. However, officials from the FCO and DCMS have been in contact about the tour. The decision whether or not to tour is a matter for the ECB.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with *(a)* UK Sport and *(b)* the England and Wales Cricket Board on the proposed International Cricket Conference Headquarters in London. [200364]

Mr. Caborn: Earlier this year I had an exchange of correspondence with Sue Campbell, Chair of UK Sport, about proposals to relocate the headquarters of the ICC from Lord's cricket ground. My officials have also taken part in discussions with representatives of UK Sport. I am not aware that any discussions have taken place between my Department and the ECB.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff there were in her Department in each year since 1997. [200189]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to table C of the annual publication "Civil Service Statistics" which provides staff numbers in my department and its agency in each year from 1997 to 2003, copies of which are laid in the Libraries of both Houses. 2004 figures have been published on the Cabinet Office website www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

Departmental Telephone Use

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is on the use of telephones by members of staff in her Department for personal use relating to *(a)* domestic calls and *(b)* international calls; and if she will make a statement. [200886]

Mr. Caborn: My Department has a policy on the use of telephones for personal calls which recognises that such calls may be necessary but that staff should keep the number and duration to a minimum.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures she has taken to ensure that telephones in her Department are not used by staff making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [200887]

Mr. Caborn: By default, all telephones in my Department have a bar on international access. If international access is essential for an official to carry out the duties of their post then a formal written request must be submitted, countersigned by an appropriate senior official.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimates she has made of the cost to her Department of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic numbers and *(b)* international numbers in the last year for which figures are available. [200888]

Mr. Caborn: As my Department is part of the Government Telecommunications Network (GTN), it pays a set fee per annum per extension number, regardless of how many calls are made. Therefore there are no additional costs incurred as a result of personal calls.

Digital Television

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has held with *(a)* the European Commission and *(b)* other European Union member states regarding the parameters permitted by European state aid laws for the funding arrangements of the Government's intended switch to digital television transmission; and if she will make a statement. [200567]

Estelle Morris: We have had no formal discussions with the Commission to date regarding the state aid rules in connection with the switch to digital television transmission but we have made them and the other member states aware of our plans for switchover on various occasions, including in response to the eEurope 2005 Action Plan.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what advice she has sought regarding the parameters permitted by European state aid laws for the funding arrangements of plans to switch to digital television transmission. [200568]

Estelle Morris: In considering the plans to switch to digital television transmission, we have taken advice on state aids from experts within Government and from Ofcom.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what advice SwitchCo has sought regarding the parameters permitted by European State Aid laws for *(a)* its structure, *(b)* its funding and *(c)* the funding arrangements for the switch to digital television transmission. [200569]

Estelle Morris: There is no legal entity called "SwitchCo" currently in existence. However, broadcasters are working closely with the supply chain to create an organisation to co-ordinate the implementation of the switch to digital television and I expect them to take full account of national and European legislation.

Free TV Licences

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people in Pendle receive the free television licence for the over 75s. [199931]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Pendle constituency in 2003–04 was 5,170, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the effect the implementation of the EU Directive on Age Discrimination will have on the free TV licence for those aged over 75 years. [200187]

Estelle Morris: The provision of free television licences for the over-75s does not fall within the scope of the European Employment Directive (2000/78/EC), the age provisions of which extend only to the areas of employment and vocational training.

Horseracing

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects the British Horseracing Board to complete its assessment of the impact of the European Court of Justice's recent ruling. [200663]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* I expect that the Board will wish to complete this assessment with some urgency

Olympic Games

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment has been made of the benefits to Northern Ireland of the Olympic Games being held in London in 2012. [199638]

Tessa Jowell: We are assessing the impact of staging the Games on the whole of the UK. We and London 2012 are working with all the regional development agencies and devolved administrations to ensure the whole of the UK, including Northern Ireland, can benefit.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether football matches are planned to take place in Northern Ireland as part of the bid for a London Olympics in 2012. [199639]

Tessa Jowell: London 2012 have no current plans to hold Olympic football competition matches in Northern Ireland. This is because at present there is no stadium which meets FIFA accredited standards. If Northern Ireland builds its planned national stadium, London 2012 will consider incorporating this venue within the competition—thereby ensuring that it includes cities across the UK.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much she estimates has been spent in promoting the 2012 Olympic Games; and if she will make a statement. [199669]

Tessa Jowell: London 2012, the company established to develop, market and promote London's bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, has so far spent £15.1 million in undertaking its activities.

School Sport

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether (1) she expects the Public Service Agreement (PSA) to increase the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality physical education and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 to be met; what percentage has been reached to date; and what travel provisions have been made in connection with the PSA; [200358]

(2) if she will make a statement on the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links initiative. [200365]

Mr. Caborn: The Government are investing over £1 billion in England to transform school sport. The PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy is delivering an ambitious Public Service Agreement target, shared with the Department for Education and Skills, to increase the percentage of 5 to 16-year-olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport to 75 per cent. by 2006; and to 85 per cent. by 2008.

We expect the targets to be met. Evidence from the 2003–04 survey of School Sport Partnerships showed that an average of 62 per cent. of pupils in Partnerships are spending a minimum of two hours in a typical week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum. However, this figure rises to 68 per cent. in schools that have been in Partnerships the longest, while schools new to Partnerships average 52 per cent. This shows that School Sport Partnerships are making a difference.

School Sport partnerships now cover over half of schools (54 per cent.), benefiting over 3.5 million pupils. 75 per cent. of schools will be in a partnership from September 2005 and 100 per cent. from September 2006.

No special travel provisions have been made in connection with the PSA target. Time spent changing and travelling will normally fall outside the two hours.

Tourism

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support her Department gives to assist small tourism enterprises in the use of information technology. [199700]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS seeks to use information technology as a means of increasing productivity across the small tourism business sector. We are presently contributing to the Small Business Service-led review to identify how a more coherent and customer-focused offer of public sector support can be made to small businesses, and the use of information technology and e-commerce are an important element of that review. My Department is also supporting the development of the EnglandNet project, which is being developed by VisitBritain and its regional partners. When complete, EnglandNet will offer tourism enterprises access to the 11 million potential customers who visit the VisitBritain website each year. Small tourism businesses will have access to EnglandNet through regional and sub-regional destination management systems, with the option of online booking facilities.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support her Department gives to VisitBritain for e-tourism; and if she will make a statement. [199701]

Mr. Caborn: The Department is supporting the EnglandNet project, which is presently being developed by VisitBritain and its regional partners. When complete, EnglandNet will offer tourism enterprises access to the 11 million potential customers who visit the VisitBritain website each year. Individual tourism businesses will have access to EnglandNet through regional and sub-regional destination management systems, with the option of online booking facilities.

Funding from my Department for EnglandNet over 2001–02 to 2004–05 totals £6,891 million, as follows:

	£
Grant in aid funding to the English Tourism Council (to 31 March 2003)	1,034,000
Grant in aid funding to VisitBritain (from 1 April 2003)	1,852,000
Capital Modernisation Fund	600,000
Invest to Save Fund	3,405,000

As part of the EnglandNet project, an additional £300,000 has been made available from the Capital Modernisation Fund to enable Tourist Information Centres to access the extranet services to be provided by EnglandNet. A further £150,000 has also come from the Invest to Save Fund to support more general work on e-business awareness and training for tourism businesses in rural areas of England.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to increase expenditure on the tourism sector outside London. [199702]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is currently considering tourism expenditure plans for 2005–08, including allocations to VisitBritain. Her decision will be announced in the near future.

With respect to regional development agencies, who have strategic responsibility for tourism in the regions, the spending review provided for a DCMS contribution of £3.6 million per annum to the RDAs' "Single Pot" funding.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by her Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200331]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has organised a wide range of training courses designed to meet the needs of its staff. On the majority of occasions these have been delivered at DCMS buildings in London. Occasionally these training courses take place at external facilities, usually in London, and occasionally at the Government's Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) in London or Sunningdale.

Since 2003 our range of courses have been grouped under the following headings: Induction, Business Planning, Finance and Budget Management, Policy Development, Project Based Working, Leadership and Management, Ministers and Government, Information Technology and Diversity.

Figures prior to 2001 are not available. Since 2001 the total annual cost to the Department of all annual Learning and Development provision, including training courses organised for the Department, was as follows:

	£
2001–02	318,352
2002–03	590,329
2003–04	453,709
2004–05	[1]305,180

[1] to end of September 2004

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200403]

Mr. Caborn: Cancellation charges of our external providers vary between nil and 100 per cent. of the cost of the course depending on the provider and how near to the scheduled date of the course the cancellation was made. From our records we have paid the following cancellation charges in the time period specified:

	£
2002–03	495 + VAT
2003–04	0
2004–05	990 + VAT

Note:
Figures prior to 2002–03 are unavailable.

Video Conferencing Units

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [200440]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS has one videoconferencing unit covering five office locations.

DCMS has one Agency, the Royal Parks, which does not have videoconferencing facilities.

There are no plans to increase the number of videoconferencing units at present.

World Heritage

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps during the UK membership of the World Heritage Committee to ensure that *(a)* Sagarmartha national park in Nepal, *(b)* the Belize barrier reef and *(c)* Huascáran national park in Peru are put on the list of world heritage in danger as a result of climate change. [200654]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* Under Article 11 of the Covention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972 (the World Heritage Convention) the Committee is required to maintain a "list of World Heritage in Danger". There is an agreed procedure for establishing whether a site is threatened by "serious and specific dangers" and if so whether it should be included on the in Danger list. We have asked the World Heritage Centre, the Committee's Secretariat, to provide the necessary information for the Committee to consider the matter at its 29th Session.

WALES

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200181]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 10W, by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199654]

Mr. Touhig: None.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201549]

Mr. Touhig: None.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Equatorial Guinea

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he, *(b)* Ministers in his Department and *(c)* officials had discussions in an official capacity with the former right hon. Member for Hartlepool during the last 12 months concerning Equatorial Guinea. [200920]

Mr. Straw: Neither I nor Ministers in my Department have had discussions at any time about Equatorial Guinea with the former right hon. Member for Hartlepool. Since 14 September officials have had some contact with him and his office, first to inform his office of the letter my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs was sending to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker), and then in response to approaches by the former right hon. Member for Hartlepool and his office regarding recent media reports that named him in connection with the alleged coup plot.

Hamas

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether the Government was consulted about the discussions held by the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy with Hamas; whether discussions were authorised by the Council of Ministers; under what authority the discussions took place; whether discussions have taken place with other organisations and individuals on the European Union list of terrorist organisations and individuals; and if he will make a statement; [201049]

(2) what representations he has made to *(a)* foreign governments and *(b)* European Union institutions regarding the holding of discussions with Hamas since Hamas was included on the European Union list of terrorist organisations; and if he will make a statement; [201050]

(3) when the Government first became aware of discussions between Javier Solana and Hamas; and if he will make a statement. [201051]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* As the spokesman of the European Union High Representative, Javier Solana, said on 24 November:

"the Office of the High Representative Javier Solana clarifies that at no time Dr. Solana wished to imply that direct contacts between himself and Hamas had taken place. Any mention of contacts or meetings with Hamas referred to soundings and impressions conveyed to him but gathered by governments and other parties on the ground. At no time did the High Representative, nor his office, hold any direct contacts with Hamas or any other organisations appearing on the EU 'terrorist list'."

There was no discussion of any such contacts at the Council of Ministers.

Iraq (Elections)

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requests have been received from the interim Iraqi Government for assistance in the January elections. [200129]

Mr. Rammell: Responsibility for the forthcoming elections rests with the Iraqi Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). After discussion with the IECI about their requirements, The UK Government have contributed US$10 million and provided two DFID advisers to assist the IECI.

Middle East

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has for a conference in London on the Middle East peace process; and if he will make a statement. [199498]

Mr. Rammell: We have made it clear that we are determined to redouble our efforts to achieve progress towards a lasting peace and to mobilise the international community to do likewise. We are looking at how we can best support both parties to move forwards, and judge that a meeting or a conference may at some stage help the new Palestinian leadership prepare for Israeli disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank in the context of the Roadmap.

Overseas Contracts

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the success of British companies in winning government contracts in other European countries. [199819]

Mr. Boateng: I have been asked to reply.

In the 2003 pre-Budget report, the Chancellor announced that Alan Wood, Chief Executive of Siemens plc, was to lead a review of UK businesses' experiences in competing for public procurement contracts in other EU countries. The report, to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, was published in November 2004 and is available in the Library of the House.

Palestinian Authority

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assurance he has *(a)* sought from and *(b)* been given by the Israeli Government that elections for the Palestinian Authority in January will be given appropriate support by Israel. [199502]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this issue during his visit to Israel and Palestine last week. On 24 November, following the Foreign Secretary's meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom. Mr. Shalom stated that "Israel will do everything in its power to facilitate the smooth running of the forthcoming Palestinian elections. We also welcome the commitment of the international community to this process."

Sudan

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with the Government in Sudan on the situation there. [200474]

Mr. Mullin: In recent months my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Secretary of State for International Development and I have all visited Sudan and held in depth meetings with the Sudanese Government. Most recently the Foreign Secretary spoke to the First-Vice President on the telephone on 16 November. We are in regular contact with the Sudanese Government through our Ambassador in Khartoum. Discussions cover both the situation in Dafur and the North-South peace process.

UK Embassies

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many personnel are employed *(a)* from his Department and *(b)* locally by the commercial department of the UK Embassy in Vienna. [199939]

Mr. Alexander: One full-time UK based member of staff is employed in the Commercial Section of the Embassy in Vienna plus 30 per cent. of the Ambassador and 15 per cent. of the Deputy Head of Mission. There are five Locally Engaged positions, but six staff (two on a job share). (There are 21 UK Based Staff employed in the whole of the Embassy)

WORK AND PENSIONS

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which companies he has had discussions with regarding contributions to the Financial Assistance Scheme; and how much each of them has agreed to contribute. [200162]

Malcolm Wicks: Ministers from the Department for Work and Pensions have held many meetings with representatives from the pensions industry.

No direct financial contributions have yet been made, but we are keen that the industry should have the opportunity to offer support to the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) either by voluntary financial contributions or assistance in kind.

We are most grateful for the valuable assistance in kind offered by the pensions industry to date, both in sharing their expertise through the FAS Industry Working Group and in supporting the data collection exercises which enhance our understanding of the problems which the FAS must address. We maintain a firm hope that the industry will further support the Government's leadership in assisting these individuals, and we believe that they have a strong interest in doing so.

IT Systems

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many different IT systems hold customer benefit data; and what plans he has to integrate those systems. [200119]

Jane Kennedy: The Department currently holds customer benefit data in seven major IT benefit systems supported by the Departmental Central Index, which holds national insurance numbers and details, and the Personal Details Computer System. The Personal Details Computer System is the Department's master repository for customer personal details and ensures the synchronisation of customer data across the benefit systems.

As part of the modernising delivery programme, we are increasing data sharing capability across the Department and rationalising the number of systems we have holding data. Key to this is the introduction of the Customer Information System which will become the central repository for core customer benefit data. This new system will start to be delivered from mid-2005 and will enable a more consistent and consolidated approach when interacting with our customers.

Myasthenia Gravis

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on benefit entitlement for those diagnosed with myasthenia gravis. [201078]

Maria Eagle: We do not pay benefits based on medical diagnosis.

Incapacity benefit is intended to provide a source of income for sick and disabled people of working age who are unable to work.

Entitlement to disability living allowance is based on walking difficulties and/or the need for personal care which results from severe disability. The customer's medical condition is not, necessarily, the key factor. Rather it is the disablement that results from it and the effects of that disablement.

We are ensuring that the benefit system encourages and promotes work where possible. However, we recognise that those with the most severe conditions may never be able to work, and benefits provide security for those for whom work is not an option.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201548]

Maria Eagle: No questions were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued.

Theft and Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will launch an inquiry into the levels of theft and fraud in his Department committed by officials and contractors. [201186]

Mr. Pond: A typographical error by *Hansard* in reporting a response to a previous question overstated levels of fraud and theft by a factor of 1,000. The actual level of fraud detected involving contractors is less than 1/20 of 1 per cent. of the level of expenditure. The actual level of frauds involving staff is even smaller.

The Department has recently formed a dedicated unit with responsibility for the prevention, deterrence and investigation of internal fraud. Over a number of years actual levels of fraud and theft by contractors and officials has not significantly changed and while the Department will continue to take all reasonable steps to reduce this further it does not give grounds for an inquiry.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women in Pendle receive the winter fuel allowance. [199930]

Malcolm Wicks: In Winter 2003–04, the total number of people in Pendle who received the winter fuel payment was 16,850, of which 7,495 were men and 9,355 were women. We would expect the numbers to be similar for winter 2004–05.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

2. Locals authorities and Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* people and *(b)* households in the Weston-Super-Mare constituency were (i) eligible to receive and (ii) received the winter fuel payment in 2003–04. [199766]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the number of people in the constituency of Weston-Super-Mare who were eligible to receive a winter fuel payment as DWP administrative data does not contain complete information on household circumstances, and payments are based on household composition.

The number of people in the Weston-Super-Mare constituency who received a winter fuel payment for winter 2003–04 was 23,505, in 16,045 households.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

2. Any residence found to have four or more occupants is not included in these figures as it is assumed to be a residential care or nursing home.

3. Locals authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Court Closures

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, if he will list the *(a)* magistrates courts and *(b)* county courts which have been closed since May 1997. [201019]

Mr. Leslie: The provision of magistrates courthouses is a matter for the 42 Magistrates Courts Committees (MCCs). From 1 April 2005 Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) will take responsibility for the administration of all courts below the House of Lords. HMCS will be an executive agency of the Department of Constitutional Affairs.

MCCs are not required by statute to inform my Department of magistrates court closures that are not subject to an appeal, although the Department does keep a complete record of county court closures. The information available to my Department on the county courts and magistrates courthouses which have closed since 1997 has been posted in the Libraries of both Houses.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200180]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe to the hon. Member for South Holland and The Deepings (Mr. Hayes) on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 10W.

Fines Enforcement

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, how many people were working on fines enforcement for each magistrates courts on *(a)* 1 April of each year since 2001 and *(b)* the latest date for which figures are available. [201018]

Mr. Leslie: The latest estimates are that there are approximately 1,900 magistrates courts staff working on criminal enforcement (including fines). Data for numbers of staff working on fine enforcement in individual magistrates' courts is not held centrally, and it is therefore not possible to provide a breakdown for each court. In addition no figures are available for preceding years.

Royal Charters

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Royal Charters there are. [200698]

Mr. Leslie: The records of the Privy Council Office show that 945 Charters have been granted since the year 1231. Many of those will no longer be in force, but the task of establishing which are still extant could be undertaken only at disproportionate cost.

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list Royal Charters which have been amended in the last 10 years. [200699]

Mr. Leslie: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Royal Charters have been *(a)* awarded and *(b)* cancelled in each of the last 30 years. [200700]

Mr. Leslie: The number of Charters granted in each year since 1974 is shown in the following table. Information on the number of Charters that have been surrendered in that period could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

	Number of charters granted
1974	1
1975	3
1976	6
1977	1
1978	1
1979	3
1980	3
1981	2
1982	1
1983	3
1984	8
1985	0
1986	3
1987	2
1988	2
1989	4
1990	2
1991	1
1992	2
1993	3
1994	6
1995	4
1996	7
1997	3
1998	4
1999	2
2000	2
2001	2
2002	3
2003	2
2004	5

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are taken to enforce conditions attached to Royal Charters; and who is responsible for such enforcement. [200701]

Mr. Leslie: Grants of Royal Charters are not subject to conditions.

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Government's policy is on the future award of Royal Charters. [200702]

Mr. Leslie: The Privy Council will continue to advise Her Majesty to grant Royal Charters to bodies where such a grant would be in the public interest.

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, what process is followed in order to alter the terms of Royal Charters. [200703]

Mr. Leslie: All amendments to Charters are subject to the approval of Her Majesty in Council. Once a body has duly resolved to amend its Charter it sends the amendments to the Privy Council Office, who arrange for them to be considered by an ad hoc Committee of Council. If the Committee agrees that the amendments should be allowed they are put to Her Majesty in Council for approval.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 2 December 2004

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EU Aid

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with European Union counterparts about the *(a)* allocation and *(b)* delivery of EU aid to third world countries; and if he will make a statement. [200719]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: On 23 November, the Secretary of State attended the General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels, which discussed both the issues of aid allocation and its delivery.

DFID continues to work for agreement that a much larger share of EC aid of higher quality should be allocated to low income countries where it will have the greatest impact on poverty reduction. Over the past two years, EC spending has been moving in the right direction, with 56 per cent. of aid being spent in low-income countries in 2003. A further re-balancing of aid is required if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met and the UK has called for the EC to spend 70 per cent. of its aid in low-income countries by 2008. This proportion would still recognise the needs of the poor in middle-income countries. It remains clear from the Council discussion that a number of other member states do not subscribe to this view. After a discussion, the Council Conclusions invited the Commission to find ways to increase focus on the poorest, with a specific focus on Africa.

EC aid has gone through serious reforms since it launched its reform programme back in 2000. DFID welcomes this and recognises important progress in terms of speedier delivery, more local capacity in the field and improved portfolio performance overall. Current reforms have focused on qualitative improvements. DFID believes there is a case for continuing reforms also under the new Commission, but with a focus on quality and impact of EC aid. The 23 November Council called upon the new Commission to undertake an assessment of EC External Assistance and to identify what follow up to the Reform Process is required focusing on quality, impact and results.

Falluja

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Developmentwhat assistance his Department is giving to Iraqi civilians remaining in Falluja. [201661]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) is leading on humanitarian and reconstruction work in Falluja and has established a central team to co-ordinate its assistance to the people of Fallujah. The UK is in close contact with the IIG, and DFID is providing technical advice to its Fallujah coordination team.

The IIG and the Multi-National Force operating in Fallujah have reported that there is no humanitarian crisis so far and humanitarian visits to Falluja by British military officials confirm this assessment. The Iraqi Ministry of Health, Iraqi Security Forces, and the Multi-National Force have reported that their stockpiles of humanitarian supplies have provided for the immediate needs of Falluja's civilians. The IIG and Iraqi Red Crescent trucks containing humanitarian supplies are entering the city and distributing food, water, and medical supplies. Work to clear rubble and restore basic services is also underway.

DFID is maintaining close contact with the IIG, with representatives of the Multi-National Force, and with humanitarian organisations on the ground, to address the needs of Falluja's population. DFID is ready to respond positively to requests for humanitarian help or further advice in Falluja or elsewhere.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what information he has received on the *(a)* location and *(b)* humanitarian condition of Iraqi civilians who left Falluja in advance of the US bombing. [201663]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Iraqi Interim Government (IIG), together with its humanitarian agency partners, is monitoring the location and condition of Falluja's displaced population. The IIG has reported that the main concentrations of Falluja's civilians are located in Ameria, Habania, Saqlawiyah, and Gaana, with a significant number also in Baghdad.

The IIG judges that there is no humanitarian crisis in Falluja or the surrounding area.The Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) assessment teams have visited the four areas around Falluja where it considers the main concentrations of Falluja's displaced population to be located. The MoH teams report that most of the displaced citizens are staying with family and friends, some are in schools, mosques, and government buildings, and a small number are in tents. Pre-positioning of supplies has helped to provide for immediate needs, and the IIG and humanitarian agencies are continuing to deliver essential food, water, blankets and medical supplies. The IIG plans to send public health teams and medical staff into the four main areas to address potential health and hygiene concerns until it is safe for the displaced families to return to Falluja. DFID is providing technical advice to the IIG Falluja co-ordination team and is ready to respond positively to further requests for humanitarian help or advice in Falluja and the surrounding area.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assistance his Department is giving to the Iraqi civilians who left Fallujah in advance of the US bombing. [201662]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) is leading on assistance to the citizens of Falluja who left the city before military action took place. The IIG has established a ministerial team to co-ordinate its response, which includes supplying food, water and medical supplies to Falluja's displaced population, and planning for their safe return to the city. DFID is

providing advice to the IIG Falluja team and is ready to respond positively to requests for further humanitarian help or advice in Falluja and the surrounding area.

Jamaica

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what studies his Department has undertaken into the effects that the European Commission's proposed price reductions on sugar will have on his Department's existing programmes in Jamaica. [200238]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is currently reviewing the composition of its Jamaica programme, developing in more detail, the areas identified in the Regional Assistance Plan for the Caribbean. This assessment will be undertaken in discussion with the Government of Jamaica and in light of the studies on the potential impact of sugar price changes.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment his Department has made of the impact that a three-year transition period and a price reduction on sugar would have on the sugar industry in Jamaica; [200239]

(2) what studies his Department has undertaken into the effects that the European Commission's proposed price reductions on sugar would have on the sugar industry in *(a)* Jamaica and *(b)* the wider Caribbean region. [200240]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID recognises that the reform of the EU sugar regime will have a significant impact on the sugar industry in Jamaica and the Caribbean, and hence on many communities already among the poorest in the region.

The impact of EU reform will vary between countries, and will depend crucially on the policies that Caribbean countries adopt with regard to their sugar industries. The Government of Jamaica are bringing together representatives of the Government, the sugar industry, academia, trade unions, and other civil society organisations to identify possible future scenarios for Jamaica's agricultural sector. The exercise will develop a relevant and practical action plan for the future, which will be passed to the Government of Jamaica for consideration and action.

The impact of EU reform will also depend on the transitional assistance available. On a parallel track, DFID is working to ensure that the EU offers the most effective possible package of transitional assistance.

In order to help inform the debate and ensure the impact on developing countries is taken sufficiently into consideration, DFID commissioned a study last year with LMC International and Oxford Policy Management, 'Addressing the Impact of Preference Erosion in Sugar on Developing Countries'. The study is divided into two sections. The first part assesses the economic and social impact on the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) Sugar Protocol countries of the various reform scenarios suggested by the European Commission. The second part of the study assesses alternative options for addressing the impact of preference erosion in sugar. The purpose of this analysis was to identify various options for debate by the ACP and the EU.

DFID has recently commissioned two further pieces of work on this issue: from LMC International, 'EU Sugar Reform: the Implications for the Development of Least Developed Countries (LDCs)' and from the Overseas Development Institute: 'Forthcoming changes in EU sugar/banana markets: a menu of options for an effective EU transitional assistance package'. This latter report should help those countries affected by reform determine their priorities for a transitional package. It also includes some analysis of alternative uses for sugar.

DFID is now following up this work by commissioning a series of country profiles for those Caribbean countries that will be affected by the change in the EU trade regime. The principle objective of these profiles is to identify a specific menu of options for an effective competitive fund package, which addressees the impact of sugar reform at both the national and the household level.

Snow Cover (Everest/Nepal)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Developmentwhat estimate he has made of the percentage of snow cover on Mount Everest in *(a)* 1953, *(b)* 1983 and *(c)* 2003; and what assessment he has made of the impact on Nepal of changes in the level of snow cover. [200691]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Quantifying the change in percentage snow cover on Mount Everest from 1953 to 2003 is difficult because there have been few surveys of the mountain's snow-covered area over the period in question and none of these surveys has been continual. DFID has recently funded a research project on Snow and Glacier Aspects of Water Resources Management in the Himalayas, 2001–2004 (SAGARMATHA) that undertook analysis of temperature data and developed a predictive model to assess impacts of changes. The analysis revealed a trend of increasing annual average temperature between 1961–1996 of around +0.07° C/ year across Nepal, while data from the 15 highest gauges for the period 1976–96, at elevations of between 1800 and 4100 metres, showed an upward trend of +0.1° C/ year. If maintained, such trends will cause the snow-covered area in the Nepal Himalaya to recede.

Photographs taken of the mountain since the 1950s, and other anecdotal evidence, do suggest a general reduction both in the snow-covered area and the spatial extent of the mountain's glaciers, but with the snow-covered area varying within each year and from year to year, it is not possible to provide definitive figures from these for the percentage change.

The impacts of a reduced snow-covered area are many. There is a greater tendency for glaciers to retreat resulting in glacial lakes being formed behind unstable moraine dams. Consequently a build-up of melt-water and/or glacier surges behind these structures increases the threat of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), several of which have been reported in Nepal. The reduction in snow and ice cover also has potential impacts on water resources availability and use downstream: it is likely to lead to a temporary increase

followed, ultimately, by a reduction in river flows. Increased river flows, resulting from more glacial ice being exposed for melting, could increase the incidence of flooding and landslides; whereas reduced river flows, as the glacial ice disappears, could affect agricultural productivity, fisheries, hydropower generation, industry, domestic water supply, and transportation.

The SAGARMATHA project sought to quantify the timing and extent of these impacts across the Himalayan region. It concluded that, while glaciers were retreating throughout the Himalaya, the threat to future water availability was greatest in the west. In the eastern Himalaya changes in the melt-water from glaciers has a relatively small effect. The project's models forecast that flows in eastern Nepal would gradually increase for several decades but would eventually diminish. In the west, river flows were forecast to diminish rapidly over the next few decades, which will be a concern for both India and Pakistan.

Water/Sanitation Projects

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans his Department has to work with *(a)* other donors and *(b)* main partner governments to establish sector wide approaches in water and sanitation. [200112]

Mr. Gareth Thomas *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The Department for International Development (DFID) works with its partners to support governments to achieve the Millennium development goals, including the water and sanitation goals. Where appropriate, DFID provides Poverty Reduction Budgetary Support, which helps countries implement their Poverty Reduction Strategies. Poverty Reduction Strategies are produced following a consultation process within the country concerned, and between governments and donors. Water and sanitation are a key part of these discussions.

Where DFID does not provide all or any of its assistance through Poverty Reduction Budgetary Support, DFID may work with others towards sector wide approaches in water and sanitation. This will depend on the specific situation in a country, including whether water and sanitation are agreed priorities for DFID support. DFID is also promoting improved donor co-ordination in the water and sanitation sector, under the European Union Water Initiative.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Chernobyl

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farms were affected in 1986 by fallout from Chernobyl; on how many farms restrictions remain in place as a result; and when she expects the effects to be eradicated from farms in Wales. [200268]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

This is a devolved issue and the Food Standards Agency for Wales has responsibility for this area.

Fisheries

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the term "common policy in the sphere of operation of fisheries", specified in the Maastricht Treaty, was replaced by the term "exclusive competence to manage marine life" in the proposed constitutional treaty for the European Union; and what assessment she has made of the consequences for the UK of the change. [200259]

Mr. Bradshaw: The conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy has been an exclusive competence of the Community since 1979. This competence is derived from a combination of the EC Treaty and the language negotiated in 1973 in the UK Act of Accession and endorsed by all the then member states. This has been confirmed by the European Court of Justice.

The new Constitutional Treaty has been drafted to reflect this position and does not extend competence in fisheries.

Foot and Mouth

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the *(a)* outcome of her Department's negotiations with the European Commission in respect of the request for financial aid to assist in the management of the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001 and *(b)* the comments by the European Commission on the handling of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. [200731]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: The Department has recently concluded its negotiations with the European Commission and as a result the United Kingdom will receive a total of £350 million in co-financing for the 2001 outbreak.

The United Kingdom will continue to work with the European Commission and other member states to ensure that the lessons learned from the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001 are applied.

Nickel-cadmium Batteries

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the impact of a total ban on the sale and use of nickel-cadmium batteries on employment in the United Kingdom. [200282]

Mr. Morley: Neither the European Commission proposal for a Directive on Batteries and Accumulators nor the European Parliament's amendments at First Reading envisage a total ban on the sale and use of nickel-cadmium batteries. A partial ban has, however, been suggested during current negotiations on the proposed Directive, and is the subject of an extended impact assessment by the Council. When participating in negotiations, the Government weigh all relevant factors, including impacts on cost, employment, customer choice, and environmental protection, in consultation with business and other interested parties.

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to improve collection and recycling rates for nickel-cadmium batteries. [200283]

Mr. Morley: The proposed EU Directive on Batteries and Accumulators, currently being negotiated, contains collection and recycling targets for portable and industrial nickel-cadmium batteries. If these targets appear in an adopted Directive, it is likely that a range of approaches to achieving them will be necessary. We will develop these in consultation with industry and other parties, taking account of best practice, cost, and environmental impact.

Offshore Dredging

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to ensure that offshore dredging of marine aggregates does not adversely affect fish spawning. [199496]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

No offshore dredging of marine aggregates can take place without first receiving an environmental consent called a favourable 'Government View' from the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. His decisions on Government View applications are only reached following wide publicity and consultation, including with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which, in turn, consults the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science; the Sea Fisheries Inspectorate and local fishermen. Applications are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment and must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Only if he is satisfied that there will be no significant effect on the marine environment, including, if appropriate, effects on fish spawning, will the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, consider issuing a favourable Government View. Consented proposals are subject to conditions relating to mitigation and monitoring measures; where appropriate, these may relate to fish spawning.

Unsolicited Departmental Mail

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list consultation documents and mailings that were sent unsolicited by her Department or its agencies in the most recent 12 months for which information is available that contained general information; how many of each publication were printed; and what the cost was per copy. [200321]

Alun Michael: During the period we issued 117 consultation documents. These include some very specific and narrow proposals regarding animal welfare, farm products and secondary legislation to the transposition of European legislation, amendments to environmental regulations and draft guidance consequent on domestic legislation. They also include major initiatives such as the Clean Neighbourhoods consultation, implementation of CAP reform, Rights of Way and Pollution Control. I am placing a copy of the full list in the Library of the House of Commons. It is also available on the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/default.asp. Information on the cost per copy of each mailing is not available and to establish the information would incur the Department in a disproportionate cost. The extent of the circulation will depend on the issues involved and the range of people and organisations likely to be affected by it.

Veterinary Services

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many overseas temporary veterinary officers were employed in the public sector to assist in her Department's veterinary work in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [200687]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department does not hold statistical data for overseas Temporary Veterinary Inspectors (TVIs) for the period outside of Foot and Mouth disease. During this disease, the Number of Overseas TVIs who were appointed to assist the State Veterinary Service (SVS) was 706.

The figures do not include vets employed outside the SVS whether in Defra or other Government Departments.

Temporary Veterinary Inspectors are appointed to carry out specific functions on behalf of Defra. They are not employed by the Department.

These figures are referenced from: Smith, L (2002) Foot and Mouth Disease: Veterinary Resource Issues. State Veterinary Journal 12 (1) 3–5.

Warm Front Scheme

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discretion her Department allows Warm Front Scheme managers to *(a)* repeat grants for households which have already benefited from Warm Front and *(b)* fast track exceptionally vulnerable households. [200448]

Mr. Morley: Under the current scheme applicants are entitled to assistance once at the same address. However, in cases where heating measures are not recommended the Scheme Managers will review any further application within a twelve month period.

A Fuel Poverty Action Plan, including proposals for the future development of Warm Front is expected to be published shortly.

We are currently funding a project to assess the feasibility of fast-tracking applicants with particular medical conditions to the scheme. The project is being delivered by the National Energy Action, the Warm Front Scheme Managers and local health practitioners. Results will be reported to the Department during 2005.

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what mechanisms are in place to monitor private landlords' compliance with the requirement to freeze rents for a one or two year period after a Warm Front improvement. [200449]

Mr. Morley: Where measures are to be installed by Warm Front in a privately rented property, prior to work going ahead landlords sign an agreement that they will not increase the rent for either one or two years.

However depending on the measures provided, where a property is regulated under a fair rent agreement or is subject to an annual rent review, landlords can increase the rent providing it does not take into account the impact of any Warm Front measures installed.

The Warm Front Scheme Managers do not have any formal requirement to check whether these arrangements are being complied with but would act if contacted by a tenant on this issue.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Bullfighting

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, (1) if she will make representations to Ofcom to prevent the exposure of children to graphic pictures of bullfighting in late afternoon transmissions; [200705]

(2) what controls there are on the content of satellite transmissions by Sky television. [200706]

Estelle Morris: Responsibility for what is broadcast on television rests with the broadcasters and the appropriate regulator and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State therefore has no plans to make specific representations to Ofcom about this issue.

Broadcasters established in the United Kingdom and licensed by Ofcom must comply with their programme code which is intended, among other things, to ensure that children are not exposed to inappropriate material.

Some of the channels on the Sky platform are not licensed by Ofcom but by other jurisdictions in Europe. Under EU law, in the Television Without Frontiers (TVWF) Directive, licences granted in EU countries are recognised throughout the EU and stations which hold a licence can also be carried on other countries' domestic satellite platforms. In these circumstances they are subject to regulation by their country of origin only, and not by the second country on whose satellite platform they also appear.

The TVWF Directive provides minimum standards for the protection of minors. The UK Government would intervene only if those standards were manifestly, seriously and gravely breached and Ofcom had recommended intervention.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of her Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200166]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Minister for Europe on Monday 29 November, *Official Report*, columns 10W-11W.

Legislation (Enactment)

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what pieces of legislation passed in the last 30 years that the Department is responsible for remain to be brought into force, broken down by year of enactment. [200444]

Mr. Caborn: The pieces of primary legislation passed since 1997, for which the Department is responsible, and which remain to be brought into force, are listed in the table. The information requested for the period prior to 1997 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Act	
Licensing Act 2003	
2	97–99
26–28	100 in part
34 in part	101
35 in part	102 in part
36 in part	103–106
37 in part	107 in part
38	108–109
39 in part	110 in part
40–46	119
47 in part	121
48–50	136–154
51 in part	156–157
52–53	159–166
56–57	167 in part
58 in part	168–172
59 in part	173 in part
67	174–175
80	176 in part
81	177
84 in part	179–180
85 in part	181 in part
86 in part	196
87 in part	198 in part
88–89	Sch 5 in part
93–94	Sch 6 in part
95 in part	Sch 7 in part
96 in part	Sch 8 in part
Communications Act 2003	
180	401
231 in part	406 in part
265–70	409
272–274	Sch 6
299 in part	Sch 12 in part
300	Sch 17 in part
338 in part	Sch 19 in part
Horserace Betting and Olympic Lottery Act 2004	
All except 40–42	
Human Tissue Act 2004	
47	

Off-licences

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many applications for off-licences have been objected to by local residents in each of the last 10 years; what the main reasons given for such objections were; and what proportion of licences objected to were rejected. [201653]

Mr. Caborn: This information is not held centrally and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Andrew Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in her Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201366]

Mr. Caborn: There were no appeals regarding special advisers made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

Under-age Drinkers

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to increase penalties for those who sell alcohol to under-age drinkers. [201523]

Mr. Caborn: Under the Licensing Act 2003 the maximum fine for selling alcohol to an individual aged under 18 will increase to a maximum of £5,000 (level 5 on the standard scale). This is an increase on the maximum penalty available under the Licensing Act 1964, which is a fine of £1,000 (level 3 on the standard scale). Furthermore, on convicting a personal licence holder for such an offence (or a range of offences set out in the 2003 Act), the court will have the power to order the forfeiture of the personal licence or its suspension for up to six months. Also, an application for a personal licence could be refused because the applicant has such a conviction. In addition, such a conviction could jeopardise an application for the renewal of a personal licence. By contrast, under current law, the holder of a justices' licence may have his licence declared forfeit by the court only on conviction for a second offence under certain provisions of the 1964 Act. The 2003 Act is being brought into force in stages and it is planned that the sentencing provisions referred to above would be in force from November 2005.

TRANSPORT

Car Emissions

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* low carbon vehicles and *(b)* vehicles were sold in the UK in each of the last five years. [201208]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government support sales of low carbon vehicles in a number of ways, as summarised in our "Powering Future Vehicles Strategy". Our Vehicle Excise Duty and company car tax regimes in particular reward those who choose the cleanest, most fuel-efficient cars.

We reported progress on low carbon vehicle sales in the Second Annual Report on the delivery of the Powering Future Vehicles Strategy, published in October 2004 and available via the Department's website. Some good progress has been made in recent years. Average new car fuel efficiency has been improving each year since 1995 in the UK, by between 2003 sales of cars with a fuel efficiency of 120 g/km carbon dioxide or better made up about 3 per cent. of total new car sales.

Information on annual new vehicle registrations is published each year in "Transport Statistics Great Britain", available via the Department's website. Total new vehicle registrations and new registrations of private and light goods vehicles are presented in the following table.

Thousand

	All vehicles	*Of which, private and light goods vehicles*
2003	3,231.9	2,820.7
2002	3,229.4	2,815.6
2001	3,137.7	2,709.7
2000	2,870.9	2,429.8
1999	2,765.8	2,342.0

Cycling

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he will take to promote cycling in the English regions after the end of the contract for the English Regions Cycling Development Team in May 2005. [201224]

Charlotte Atkins: We have announced a wide range of measures to promote cycling, many of which can be found in our Action Plan on Walking and Cycling published June this year. These measures include £10 million to provide links from the National Cycle Network to more schools, and over £500,000 for improved bike parking at 200 targeted stations to aid bike and rail journeys. A new National Standard for cycle training will be launched shortly. We will also be working with the bicycle industry, DfES, local authorities, teachers and parents to roll out the "Bike It" scheme to the more than 250 school travel advisors. "Bike It" aims to make comprehensive provision for cycling to school by putting in place cycle training, bike parking and safer routes.

Intercity Trains

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what information he holds on the performance of intercity train companies; [200429]

(2) if he will publish information he holds on the punctuality of Virgin Trains' intercity services. [200430]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority monitors the performance of all train operators, including Virgin, and publishes the results in their quarterly "National Rail Trends" publication. Copies are held in the Library of the House.

Level Crossings

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many manned level crossings were *(a)* closed and *(b)* converted to automatic operation in each of the last five years for which figures are available; [199419]

(2) how many permanent road closures over railway lines at the point of level crossings there were in each of

Mr. McNulty: During the last two years, 178 level crossings have been closed by Network Rail. Almost all of these were crossings worked manually by users on private roads.

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the use of cameras linked to heat and movement sensors triggering remote signalling to prevent train and road vehicle collisions at level crossings. [200087]

Mr. McNulty: The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is conducting a formal industry investigation into the tragic derailment at Ufton Nervet, Berkshire on 6 November. As part of this, a panel of level crossing experts from Network Rail and RSSB has been convened to consider practical suggestions which might prevent similar incidents in the future.

Mersey Crossing

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the contribution that a new Mersey crossing may make to the economic growth of the North West. [201583]

Charlotte Atkins: Halton borough council will shortly be submitting to my Department a revised appraisal of the proposed New Mersey Crossing including an assessment of the wider economic benefits of this scheme to the areas that it would serve. We will consider this assessment once it has been submitted.

Rail Franchises

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who will be responsible for drawing up the new franchises created as a result of the termination of the Central Trains franchise; what the timetable is for the developments of these franchises; and to whom representations should be made about suggestions for new services. [200100]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State announced in the House on 19 October that he would reduce the number of rail franchises to 19. He also announced that when the Central Trains franchise expires in 2006, routes will be distributed into the Silverlink Trains, Virgin Cross Country, Midland Mainline, Chiltern and Northern franchises. Where appropriate, these will be put out to competitive tender as soon as possible. Responsibility for this process rests with the Strategic Rail Authority and any successor body. Representations about potential new services should be sent to the Strategic Rail Authority until such time as DfT, subject to the Railways Bill becoming law, takes over its functions.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who will be responsible for drawing up the terms of the new Greater Western franchise; what the timetable is for its development; and to whom representations about the services it specifies should be made. [200101]

Mr. McNulty: Plans for a Greater Western franchise were first announced by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) on 6 November 2002 following extensive local existing First Great Western, First Great Western Link (previously Thames Trains) and Wessex Trains franchises into one operation as part of the process of reducing the number of rail franchises to 19 as the Secretary of State announced in the House on 19 October. The SRA is currently developing an invitation to tender for these services which will be issued in summer 2005. The new franchise is scheduled to commence in April 2006. Any representations on the Greater Western franchise should be sent to the SRA, until such time as DfT, subject to the Railways Bill becoming law, takes over its functions.

Pedestrian Rail Crossings

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is with respect to the provision of tunnels at pedestrian rail crossings where there have been fatalities, with particular reference to the Jamaica Road Crossing in Malvern, Worcestershire. [201467]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for Network Rail, as the infrastructure manager. However, I understand that Network Rail has no current plans to install a tunnel at the Jamaica Road pedestrian level crossing in Malvern, Worcestershire.

Public Transport Subsidy

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his latest estimate is of the public transport subsidy per head of population from central Government for each English county in each year from 1997 to 2005; and if he will make a statement. [199898]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport does not hold financial information and expenditure in this format. Total departmental spend and planned expenditure from 1994–95 to 2014–15 was published as a graph in "The Future of Transport: a network for 2030", Annex A. (Cm 6234).

For a breakdown of central and local government expenditure on transport in terms of England, Scotland, Wales and Great Britain, see Table 1.15 in Transport Statistics Great Britain 2004 (Published 2004).

Copies of both documents are available in the Libraries of the House.

Railways (Scotland)

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the proposed devolvement of control of Scotland's railways as proposed by the Railways Bill will give powers to the Scottish Executive to renationalise railways. [200922]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* No. While streamlining the structure of the Rail industry and making a number of amendments to current rail legislation, the Railways Bill does not propose any changes to the status of Network Rail, which would remain a private 'not for dividend'

operating, maintaining and renewing Britain's rail network. Nor does the Bill propose amendments to Section 25 of the Railways Act 1993, which prevents any public sector body or emanation of the Crown or any company controlled by the Crown from operating a franchise, other than as an operator of last resort.

Road Noise

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has spent on noise reduction barriers to reduce noise from roads in each of the last seven years. [200611]

Mr. Jamieson: Figures for the last seven years are not available. Spend on noise reduction barriers that are provided in conjunction with highway improvement schemes are not separately identified in the scheme cost. Spend on the installation of noise barriers provided retrospectively on older trunk roads that commenced in 2000 has been met by the £5 million per year ring-fenced allocation.

Wheel Loss

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has commissioned in respect of the products which claim to prevent wheel loss. [201199]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department has not itself commissioned such research. However, work carried out on behalf of the British Standards Institution indicated that a loss of clamp force—due to settlement between the interfaces of the wheel-fixing assembly—can take place without rotation of the nut. Thus, although use of locking devices can prevent loss of wheel nuts the devices cannot counteract a loss of clamp force, and excessive wear as a consequence of this could result in loss of a wheel while nuts were still attached. Nonetheless there might be benefit in some cases, with such equipment preventing or delaying total loss of a wheel.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice his Department has issued to *(a)* manufacturers and *(b)* operators of heavy commercial vehicles on reducing road traffic accidents attributable to lost wheels. [201201]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department, in association with the Confederation of Passenger Transport, Freight Transport Association, Institute of Road Transport Engineers, Road Haulage Association and the Tyre Industry Council, has issued a leaflet offering guidance on regular and effective wheel fixing maintenance measures to reduce the possibility of wheel loss.

Copies of the leaflet have been placed in the Library of the House.

Roadworks

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much and what proportion of the Highways Agency budget for 2004–05 is expected to be spent on *(a)* noise barriers and *(b)* other environmental programmes in (i) maintenance and (ii) non-maintenance programmes; [200639]

(2) what route mileage of *(a)* road surface and *(b)* noise barriers is expected to be installed by the Highways Agency and its operators in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06 and (iii) 2006–07. [200901]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency does not have available all data in relation to noise barriers and other environmental measures in the format requested. However, it is known that approximately £8.5 million will be spent on noise barriers in the current financial year. This figure is about 0.5 per cent. of the Highways Agency's published business plan total programme budget.

The total approximate cost of environmental measures for the current financial year is £20 million. This figure includes measures such as wildlife fencing, badger runs and landscape planting. Although some of the measures are noise related, it is not possible to break down the costs to extract these.

The cost of noise mitigation measures included in maintenance schemes cannot be separately identified. However, when building new roads or re-surfacing existing ones, quieter noise surfacing is used where possible.

The approximate route length to be replaced or newly built in the current financial year is 400 km. The approximate length of noise barriers to be installed in the same period is 32 km. Figures are not yet available for 2005–06 and 2006–07 as budgets are yet to be confirmed.

School Transport

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many and what percentage of trips to schools were by bus by *(a)* five to 10 year olds and *(b)* 11 to 16 year olds in the latest year for which figures are available; and what proportion of these were (i) under three miles and (ii) three miles and over (1) in total and (2) broken down by region. [201206]

Charlotte Atkins: The National Travel Survey provides the data requested. The latest available data are for 2002–03, shown in the tables.

Trips to and from school 2002–03, Great Britain

Trips per child per year by:	*5 to 10 years*	*11 to 16 years*	*Percentage trips 5 to 16 years*
Bus	20	105	63
All modes	316	328	322
Percentage by:			
Bus	6	32	19
Percentage of those trips by bus:			
Under 3 miles	55	30	34
3 miles and over	45	70	66

Regional	5 to16 years: Bus trips per child per year	All trips per child per year	Percentage of trips by bus	Percentage of those trips by bus: Under 3 miles	3 miles and over
North East	55	319	17	38	62
North West	57	321	18	44	56
Yorkshire and the Humber	46	310	15	28	72
East Midlands	63	315	20	37	63
West Midlands	57	317	18	34	66
East	53	309	17	28	72
London	65	316	21	43	57
South East	56	322	17	19	81
South West	59	322	18	23	77
England	57	317	18	33	67
Wales	95	315	30	26	74
Scotland	96	374	26	43	57
Great Britain	63	322	19	34	66

Source:
National Travel Survey, DfT

Numbers of trips are averaged over all children. Bus includes local and private school buses. Figures exclude trips over 50 miles.

South Eastern Trains

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent performance improvements have been achieved by South Eastern Trains; and if he will make a statement. [201802]

Mr. Darling: Since South Eastern Trains (SET) franchise began operating on 9 November 2003 performance has been improving. At that time the yearly average number of SET services arriving on time was 79.4 per cent. Performance figures change from month to month. The most recently published figures cover the year to June 2004, and show that SET performance has risen to 80.8 per cent.

This improvement of 1.4 per cent. points is marginally better than the improvement of 1.3 per cent. points across the South East sector as a whole. Over the same period, sector performance improved from 79.3 per cent. punctuality in November last year to 80.6 per cent. in June 2004.

By way of comparison, performance on South West Trains (SWT) and Southern, the other two big south of London commuter operators, also improved over this period. SWT's yearly average was 73.7 per cent. at 9 November 2003 and rose to 74.5 per cent. in the year to June 2004. Southern performance rose from 78.2 per cent. to 79.5 per cent. over the same time.

The overall increase in punctuality for SET is driven by two factors: a reduction in the delays caused by Network Rail's infrastructure operation and maintenance of around 2 per cent.; and a comparable reduction in knock-on delays caused to SET services by other train operators.

Timber

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [201144]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department supports and welcomes the creation of a Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) which would provide much needed advice to suppliers and purchasers of timber. However, as a result of budget constraints, we are unable to provide funds towards its establishment although we expect to pay for its services when it has been created.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199645]

Charlotte Atkins: The effective handling of parliamentary questions is an issue to which I, and ministerial colleagues, attach great importance.

At all times Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively before Prorogation. However this is not always possible. One question did not receive a substantive response before the House prorogued on Thursday 18 November. It is open to the hon. Member to re-table the question this session.

TREASURY

Band Aid (VAT)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will authorise payment of a grant to the charity Band Aid equivalent to the sum to be paid in VAT by the end of the 2004–05 tax year from the sales of their new song. [201255]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer the Chancellor gave on 8 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 509W to the hon. Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire (Mrs. Lawrence)

Civil Service Jobs (Middlesbrough)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what change there will be in civil service jobs in Middlesbrough as a result of the merger of Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue. [201500]

Dawn Primarolo: We are currently working on detailed plans on where staff reductions will arise but it is still too early to say what effect the changes will have on any particular location.

Economic Policies (Lewisham, Deptford)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he has introduced to improve the financial position of *(a)* parents and *(b)* pensioners in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency; and how many recipients there were of such measures in (i) 2001 and (ii) 2004. [201098]

Mr. Timms: Changes to the tax and benefit system made by this Government mean that, compared to the 1997 system:

in 2004–05 families with children are, on average, £1,350 per year better off and families in the poorest fifth of the population are, on average, £3,000 per year better off. These improvements have been delivered in particular through increased child benefit and the introduction of tax credits. In 2001, 11,280 families in Lewisham Deptford benefited from the increases in child benefit, 1,729 working families also benefited from working families tax credit or disabled person's tax credit and 3,700 non-working families benefited from the child allowances in income support and jobseeker's allowance. In 2004, 10,915 families benefited from child benefit, of these 6,000 also benefited from more than the family element of child tax credit and 1,800 benefited from the family element of child tax credit.

the average pensioner household was £11 per week better off in 2001–02 and is £26 per week better off in 2004–05. A key part of this has been financial support offered to the poorest pensioners by pension credit, introduced in October 2003. 3,200 pensioners in Lewisham Deptford are currently benefiting from pension credit with an average award of £57.30 a week.

Child Tax Credits/Benefits

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to apportion *(a)* child tax credits and *(b)* child benefits to non-resident parents. [201506]

Dawn Primarolo: Child benefit and child tax credit are awarded to the person with main responsibility for a child. Parents may choose which of them will receive the payments, but if no agreement is reached the Board of the Inland Revenue is responsible for determining entitlement, based on the facts of each case. There is no provision to allow the splitting of payments.

The Government have an ambitious long-term goal to eradicate child poverty by 2020, and have a PSA target to halve it by 2010. To meet this challenging target it is necessary to focus financial support in a way which enables the parent with main responsibility for the child to provide for the child's needs. Child poverty groups support this approach. Splitting tax credits and benefits could have far reaching risks and consequences. The Government will continue to listen to parents and representative groups about the best way to support families with children.

Public Spending

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a statement on the change in public spending between 1997 and 2004. [201290]

Mr. Boateng: Annex B of the 2004 Pre-Budget Report contains the latest historical series on total managed expenditure, including figures for 1996–97 and 2003–04.

Timber

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the refurbishment projects that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment also comes from legal and sustainable sources. [200724]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury has no current or planned refurbishment projects which involve the procurement of timber.

The Inland Revenue, HM Customs and Excise and Valuation Office Agency outsourced works including refurbishments to a private company, Mapeley, in April 2001 under a 20-year contract. The Department's only current and planned refurbishment works are part of the Mapeley STEPS contract and are given as follows.

Due to the size of the estate, works have been grouped rather than giving line by line property data.

	Number of projects
Current	
Roofs/windows doors	6
Lighting	2
Lifts	4
HVAC	12
Electrical and Mechanical	5
H and S works/security and statutory compliance	14
General building works	82
Internal re-decoration/floorings blinds	5
Total	130
Planned to commence during next six months	
Roofs/windows doors	18
Lighting	9
Lifts	7
HVAC	21
Electrical and Mechanical	8
H and S works/security and statutory compliance	14
General building works	54
Internal re-decoration/floorings blinds	35
Total	166

The STEPS contract requires Mapeley and all contractors used by them, to comply with various environmental requirements, specifically that they must ensure all procurement follows environmental procurement guidelines (PUG 177/97). Further to this they must ensure all wood is from an independently verified sustainable source and must support the Government's vision of sustainable development. Contractors are required by contract to use timber on site during refurbishment from legal and sustainable sources. Lifecycle plans for other departmental PFI contracts are currently being compiled, all such contracts are bound by the same government guidance.

Tax Credits

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place a copy of the results of his exercise to establish the extent of fraud and error in provisional new tax credit awards for 2003–04 in the Library. [201581]

Dawn Primarolo: Claimants have until 31 January to report 2003–04 incomes and finalise their 2003–04 awards. The extent of any non-compliance in 2003–04 tax credits awards can only be estimated when all such awards have been finalised.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many TC840 forms for requesting reconsideration of recovery of tax credits have been sent out during the current tax year. [201574]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my right hon. Friend to my answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 19 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 666W.

VAT (National Lottery)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there are circumstances in which governing bodies in sport have to pay VAT on money received from the lottery. [200664]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: Lottery grants to sports governing bodies will generally be outside the scope of VAT as they are generally not payment for any supplies. VAT incurred on purchases made using grant income can only be recovered to the extent that those purchases relate to the grantee's taxable business activities. VAT can not be recovered on purchases related to an organisation's exempt supplies or non-business activities.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast City Airport

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many flights there were into Belfast City airport on average each week in the latest period for which figures are available, broken down by type of aircraft; and how much fuel each such aircraft would be expected to consume during the first three minutes of take-off. [200508]

Mr. Spellar: The weekly average of flights into Belfast City airport by aircraft type between 1 August 2004 and 31 October 2004 is shown in the following table. The amount of fuel used by an aircraft taking-off will vary depending on various factors including loading and weather conditions. The table shows an estimate of how much fuel each such aircraft would be expected to consume during the first three minutes of take-off where this was made available.

Aircraft type	*Number of weekly average flights*	*Fuel (kg)*
British Aerospace 146	62	265
Airbus Industries 321	45	[1]
Airbus Industries 320	9	[1]
Airbus Industries F-100	0.15	[1]
Bombardier DASH 8 Q400	126	74
Bombardier DASH 8 Q300	63	85–90
ATR72	1	74
ATR42	9	74
Embraer 145	1	150
Embraer 110	17	17
Light commercial	17	[1]

[1] Unavailable

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what steps are being taken to enforce compliance by Belfast City Airport of its planning agreement to offer 1.5 million scheduled seats for sale from the airport in any 12 month period; [200916]

(2) what assessment he has made of the extent to which Belfast City Airport is meeting its planning agreement in respect of scheduled seats on offer. [200917]

Angela Smith: The latest information available to the Department indicates that Belfast City Airport (BCA) is operating within the current limit included in the Planning Agreement in relation to the number of scheduled seats for sale.

As BCA has not to date exceeded the planning agreement restriction of 1.5 million scheduled seats for sale from the airport in any 12-month period the Department would have no reason to pursue enforcement action

Crumlin Road Gaol

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the future of Crumlin Road gaol. [200909]

Mr. Pearson: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1751W.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199691]

Mr. Pearson: At present, only the website of the Northern Ireland Office complies with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines at Priority Checkpoint 2 (Level AA) standard.

The websites of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration currently do not fully comply with the Priority Checkpoint 2 (Level AA) Guidelines although work is currently underway to attain compliance with that standard in 2005.

Fisheries Conservancy Board

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many recommended prosecutions by bailiffs in Northern Ireland have been prevented by the issuing of exemption certificates by the Fisheries Division of the Department of Agriculture Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [199861]

Angela Smith: There has been one recorded recommended prosecution which was subsequently not progressed following the issue of an exemption certificate by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. This occurred in 2002.

Housing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new housing starts there have been in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [200908]

Mr. Spellar: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1758.

Psychotherapy

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision for psychotherapy is available under the national health service in Northern Ireland. [201174]

Angela Smith: The term psychotherapy encompasses a range of interventions such as family therapy, supportive psychotherapy, psychoanalytical therapy, and cognitive and behavioural therapy. These may be delivered by therapists from various professional backgrounds and addressing a range of issues from emotional and psychological problems to severe mental illness or addiction. Identifying all psychotherapy interventions could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Roads Budget

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the Department for Regional Development Roads Service Structural Maintenance budget was in each of the last three years. [200082]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 30 November 2004:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what Roads Service's Structural Maintenance budget was for each of the last three years. I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

The maintenance of the structure of roads and footways in Northern Ireland continues to be one of the primary objectives of the Roads Service. In the last three years 01/02; 02/03; and 03/04 the expenditure on structural maintenance has been £54, £65 and £83 million respectively. In the current financial year it is expected that just under £70 million will be spent on this key activity.

Strangford View, Killyleagh

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will institute a public inquiry into the construction of a 45 foot gabion wall at Strangford View in Killyleagh; and if he will make a statement. [200370]

Angela Smith: It would not be appropriate to initiate a Public Inquiry in this instance. Planning permission was granted on 5 December 2003 for proposed alterations to an existing entrance, development roads, dwelling footprints together with storm and foul sewers. The approved plans did not provide for a wall of the scale and character now constructed and the wall is therefore unauthorised.

Although the Planning Service has received assurances that the developer is keen to rectify this breach, enforcement action has been initiated and a final warning letter issued on 22 November. Formal enforcement proceedings will now follow unless the developer takes action on the breach.

The developer has submitted a planning application for twelve 3-storey townhouses on a portion of the site, which is still under consideration. It is anticipated that the developer will submit a further application addressing the breach of planning control through the delivery of a comprehensive scheme for the whole site.

Once an application is received, interested parties will be notified and given the opportunity to inspect relevant plans and comment as appropriate. Any comments will be taken into account before a final decision is reached on the application. The Department will continue to ensure that concerns expressed by residents and elected representatives in relation to the wall are addressed.

Victoria Square

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made on redeveloping Victoria Square, Belfast. [200906]

Mr. Spellar: Further to the answer I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1775W, Churchill House was successfully imploded on 21 November.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

23. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the work of the Crown Prosecution Service in North Yorkshire. [201251]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service in North Yorkshire is working with the police and the courts to bring offenders to justice and to ensure people can have confidence in the criminal justice system.

Last year's inspection finds their casework decision-making to be "good".

The CPS is bringing persistent young offenders before the courts speedily and they are reducing the number of cases which do not result in a guilty plea or conviction after trial.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Solicitor-General what interaction takes place between local police officers and local lawyers of the Crown Prosecution Service in Nottinghamshire to improve mutual understanding of the process from arrest to charge; and if she will make a statement. [201252]

The Solicitor-General: The principal interaction between local prosecutors and police officers is through the charging scheme, which was implemented in

Nottinghamshire on 5 July 2004. Early consultation between police officers and duty prosecutors takes place in over 1,000 cases a month in Nottinghamshire. This promotes and encourages the prosecution team approach towards the common goal of bringing offenders to justice.

Additionally the CPS and police meet every month to examine management information and to learn lessons, identify issues and training needs and to consider any changes required to further improve arrangements. For example, consideration is currently being given to opening further charging centres in local police stations to reduce waiting times for officers and ensure the charging advice scheme is more convenient for police officers.

I understand that my hon. Friend met a senior official in the Crown Prosecution Service to discuss the new charging arrangements. A scheduled review is shortly to take place when the issue you have raised will be examined. A report will be sent to my hon. Friend shortly about the findings.

Evidential Test

25. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Solicitor-General what recent discussions she has had with the Crown Prosecution Service about the strength of the evidential test needed to bring a case to court. [201254]

The Solicitor-General: The evidential test for public prosecutions is set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Attorney-General and I maintain a close interest in the code. A revised edition was published last month and a copy is available in the House of Commons Library.

But the evidential test remains the same, namely whether there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. This is an objective test which means that a jury or bench of magistrates, properly directed in accordance with the law, is more likely than not to convict the defendant of the charge alleged.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Alderman Knight School

13. **Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the recent poll held in Tewkesbury borough with respect to the future of Alderman Knight School. [201240]

Margaret Hodge: Under arrangements introduced in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the consideration of proposals for establishing, altering, or discontinuing maintained special schools are a matter for local decision making. It is for the local School Organisation Committee to take into consideration any objections received when they make their decision on proposals.

Children's Diet (Behaviour)

15. **Alistair Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research he is undertaking into the relationship between diet and behaviour of children in schools. [201242]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills is not undertaking any research into the relationship between diet and behaviour of children in schools. However, the Food Standards Agency is currently carrying out research into the impact of food additives on children's behaviour.

Science Teaching

16. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the teaching of practical science in schools. [201243]

Mr. Miliband: Exciting science practical work has a key part to play in delivering inspiring science lessons. We are improving teacher skills and confidence in practical work through the national network of Science Learning Centres, our £51 million partnership with the Wellcome Trust. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority have developed a new Programme of Study for science at Key Stage 4: which gives greater flexibility and has more emphasis on practical understanding of science. science.

17. **Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to increase the number of students studying science and technology subjects at A level. [201244]

Dr. Howells: The Government's 10 Year Investment Framework for Science and Innovation outlined our plans to enthuse more students to achieve in science and technology and study these subjects at A level. We said we would improve science teaching, addressing recruitment of science teachers and providing access to continuing professional development. Through the new Programme of Study for science at Key Stage 4, we are ensuring the science taught in schools inspires learners to pursue further study.

Building Schools for the Future

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance he has issued to local authorities which have successfully bid for Building Schools for the Future funding. [201237]

Mr. Miliband: Comprehensive guidance has been issued to all authorities within Building Schools for the Future, from both the Department and its delivery partners, partnerships for Schools. This covers a wide range of areas; how to develop and Education Vision for local areas, the funding assumptions underpinning the programme, establishing a project team, the latest developments in school design and ICT, value for money procurement, and how to prepare a successful business case for final funding approval. The core guidance documents issued include BSF Wave 1 (or 2 as appropriate) Overview for Local Authorities, which covers all key areas from Education Visions to funding, design and procurement; "Building Schools for the Future": "Local Authority Education Vision— Guidelines for Wave 1" (or 2 as appropriate), which

covers the whole range of policy areas and expectations from school organisation to the 14–19 agenda; "Guidance for Local Authorities on Improved joined-up Planning and Funding"; and "Prioritisation and Forward Planning Information", which details how we prioritised local authority projects for investment, and how they can best plan ahead of Building Schools for the Future.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the refurbishment projects for *(a)* schools under the Building Schools for the Future programme, *(b)* colleges and *(c)* his Department's buildings that (i) are in progress and (ii) that will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on-site during refurbishment also comes from legal and sustainable sources. [201591]

Mr. Miliband: Funding for Building Schools for the Future is not fully available until 2005–06. While it is not possible to forecast, at this stage, how many projects will start building work at the beginning of that financial year, a limited number of wave 1 projects are expected to start building work within the next 6 months.

There is no specific guidance available on the procurement of legal and sustainably sourced timer as part of the BSF. However, recently we have launched BREEAM-Schools (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method) which will help schools, local authorities and dioceses to set environmental targets for new school buildings and major refurbishments and help designers to improve the environmental performance of their buildings. All schools supported by Government funding should aim for a very good or excellent rating. Within BREEAM there are two optional credits available where timber and wood products used in structural and non-structural elements are responsibly sourced (legal and sustainable) or utilised reused and recycled timber. There are also other credits available in BREEAM which promote the use of timber as it has a low environmental impact.

All of the Department's funds for post-16 learning and skills sector capital investment are allocated to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC has sole responsibility for the programme of renewing and replacing the FE estate. This is an operational matter for the LSC. Mr Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member about this matter and provide the information that he has asked for. A copy of this reply will be placed in the House Library.

My Department has no refurbishment projects in progress and no future plans that will call for the use of timber.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress his Department is making with the Building Better Schools programme. [201660]

Mr. Miliband: We are making excellent progress with Building Schools for the Future. On Tuesday, I announced the 20 new authorities in waves two and three, which will develop projects aiming to sing in 2006–07 and 2007–08. This brings to 39 the number of local authorities in the programme: over a quarter of the total. About 380 schools will benefit from £6.5 billion of investment being allocated over the next three years. We have established Partnerships for Schools to help authorities develop their projects. We have published a range of exemplar designs for schools, which have been well received. Two of the wave one authorities have had their outline business cases approved and are now moving to procurement; other have submitted or will submit their cases shortly for consideration.

Vocational Education

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the financial co-operation between local education authorities and the Learning and Skills Council on implementing the Government's 14–19 strategy for vocational education; and if he will make a statement. [201245]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The joint 16–19 Capital Fund announced in the Department's five year strategy will be available for cross-sector projects, including vocational provision. The forthcoming 14–19 White Paper will consider how financial co-operation between LEAs and the LSC can be further developed to help support implementation of the 14–19 strategy.

Education (Lewisham, Deptford)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action his Department has taken to improve standards in secondary schools in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency since 1997. [201105]

Mr. Miliband: Standards in secondary schools in the Deptford, Lewisham constituency have improved significantly. Since 1997 the Key Stage 3 results at Level 5 and above show an increase of 17.3 (percentage) points in English, 22.7 (percentage) points in mathematics and 21.2 inscience. At Key Stage 4 there has been an increase of 20.6 (percentage) points in the attainment of 5+A*-C GCSEs and 10.9 at 5+ A*-G GCSEs, significantly above the national rates of improvement. A summary of the improving outcomes is set out in the table . Data for 2004 will be provided at constituency level during January 2005.

Information about education and skills by constituency is made available by the Department through the 'In Your Area' web site, available at http//www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea.

Key Stage 3

	English	*Maths*	*Science*
1997	57.1	52.7	52.4
1998	66.2	53.9	51.9
1999	63.7	56.7	51.1
2000	64.1	59.4	50.9
2001	68.5	64.2	64.5
2002	7.3.3	72.0	68.9
2003	74.4	75.4	73.6

Key Stage 4

	Percentage 15 year olds gaining 5+ GCSEs at A-C*	*Percentage 15 year olds gaining 5+ GCSEs at A*-G GCSEs at A*-G*
1997	37.7	85.0
1998	43.2	87.4
1999	44.9	92.9
2000	48.1	90.6
2001	51.3	90.0
2002	57.5	93.1
2003	58.3	95.9

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action his Department has taken to improve standards in primary schools in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency since 1997. [201106]

Mr. Miliband: This year's results show that standards in primary schools are improving again. In English the percentage of 11 years olds achieving the expected level has increased by 3 (percentage) points to 78 per cent. and mathematics has increased by 1 (percentage) point to 74 per cent.

Standards in primary schools in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency have improved dramatically. Since 1997 the Key Stage 2 results show an increase of 23.2 (percentage) points in English and 23.7 (percentage) points in mathematics, significantly above the national rates of improvement of 15 (percentage) points in English and 12 in mathematics. A summary of the improving outcomes is set out in the following table. Data for 2004 is not yet available at constituency level but will be provided when the Achievement and Attainment tables are published in mid-January.

Information on education and skills by constituency is made available by the Department through the "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea

Key stage 1 (achievement at level 2 and above)

	Reading	*Writing*	*Maths*
1997	73.8	73.5	79.7
1998	70.5	71.4	77.9
1999	71.3	71.9	81.0
2000	72.4	73.3	84.7
2001	74.2	74.3	81.7
2002	77.5	77.5	83.7
2003	77	77.1	84.8

Key stage 2 (achievement at level 4 and above)

	English	*Maths*
1997	48.5	48.3
1998	52.7	55.9
1999	56.9	61.5
2000	60.6	59.6
2001	70.4	62.6
2002	65.2	64.1
2003	71.7	72.0

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital investment his Department has made in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency in the last three years. [201107]

Mr. Miliband: The capital allocations made to Lewisham Local Education Authority and its schools in the last three years are:

£000

	2002-03	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Grant.	8,326	7,314	6,455
Supported Borrowing	7,500	9,287	8,615
PFI credits	60,600	0	0
Total capital investment	76,426	16,601	15,070

Information on the split between constituencies is not held centrally. Decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are made in accordance with locally prepared asset management plans.

The capital investment on ICT made to the LEA and its schools is not included in the figures provided above. This information is kept separately and can be found in the house of Commons Library in a paper Funding for ICT schools in England.

Training Costs

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research his Department has undertaken to ascertain the willingness of employers to pay for training. [201268]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department has not commissioned any research specifically to investigate the willingness of employers to pay for training. However, the Learning and Training At Work Survey in 2000 researched how much employers do pay for training and the 2002 report "The Nature of Training and Motivation to Train in Small Firms" by John Kitching and Robert Blackburn contains a section on the barriers to training (including financial barriers). Both reports are in the House of Commons Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Nuclear Fuels

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made the financial benefit conferred on British Nuclear Fuels by the Energy Act 2004. [200656]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The Energy Act 2004 does not confer any direct financial benefit to BNFL. Its provisions relating to the civil nuclear industry (in part) establish the NDA and provide for nuclear transfer schemes to facilitate the consequent reorganisation of British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL). This reorganisation will be conducted in line with the conclusions of the Joint Strategy Review as announced by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the House of Commons on 11 December 2003

Business Support Initiatives

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will list the value of *(a)* UK High Technology Fund and *(b)* Regional Venture Capital Funds expenditure in each region since the Funds' establishment; [200528]

(2) if she will list the value of *(a)* UK High Technology Fund and *(b)* Regional Venture Capital Fund expenditure in each region since 2000. [200537]

Nigel Griffiths: As at the 31 October 2004 the Regional Venture Capital Funds (RVCFs) had invested £38,194,527. This number can be broken down regionally as follows:

Region	£
East Midlands	5,269,152
East of England	1,158,111
London	4,633,102
North East	4,890,381
North West	5,559,080
South East	9,907,201
South West	1,400,000
West Midlands	3,677,500
Yorkshire and Humber	1,700,000

The UK High Technology Fund is a fund of funds, as at the 30 June 2004 £123.6 million had been invested in nine private equity partnerships. The information necessary to determine a regional breakdown of this expenditure is not made available to us by the UK High Technology Fund.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial provision has been made for the Regional Venture Capital Funds in each year since 2001; and what the uptake was in each year. [200530]

Nigel Griffiths: The UK Government have committed a total of £74,375,000 to the Regional Venture Capital Funds.

As at 31 October 2004 this provision has been drawn down as follows:

	£
2001–02	2,100,000
2002–03	9,037,500
2003–04	19,600,000
2004–05	13,825,000
Total	44,562,500

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial provision has been made for the Research and Development Grants/Smart in each year since its inception; and what the uptake was in each year. [200531]

Nigel Griffiths: I refer to the answer given on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 84W. For 2003–04, provision for Smart and Grant for Research and Development was £27 million and expenditure of £47 million.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial provision has been made for enterprise grants in each year since its inception; and what the uptake was in each year. [200532]

Nigel Griffiths: The enterprise grant scheme is now closed. Initially the scheme was allocated a budget of £45 million between January 2000 and March 2003. The scheme deadline was extended to March 2004. The uptake has been as follows:

Financial year	*Expenditure (£ million)*
2000–01	3.6
2001–02	10.2
2002–03	11.8
2003–04	13.6

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the value of Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme expenditure in each *(a)* region and *(b)* constituency in each year since 2000. [200535]

Nigel Griffiths: The following table lists the value of Small Firms Loan Guarantee expenditure by Region from 2000–04.

Value £ million

Region	*1 April 2004 to 31 March 2001*	*1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002*	*1 April 2002 to 31 April 2002*	*1 April 2003 to 31 April 2004*
East Midlands and Eastern	5.48	8.01	8.54	9.08
North East	1.05	1.72	1.84	1.09
North West	3.6	4.2	4.39	4.93
South East	6.28	8.85	12.91	12.3
South West	4.1	4.87	3.63	5.02
West Midlands	3.44	3.39	4.75	4.76
Yorkshire and Humberside	2.63	2.91	4.04	3.15
Northern Ireland	0.26	0.43	0.27	1.22
Scotland	5.63	7.6	7.64	8.2
Wales	1.56	2.79	2.41	2.94
Total	34.03	44.77	50.42	52.69

Expenditure figures are not available by constituency.

The expenditure in the previous table is offset by the premiums and recoveries in the following table.

These figures are not available by region.

1 April to 31 March each year	*Value £ million*	*Total Net Expenditure (£ million)*
2000–01	9.2	24.83
2001–02	9.3	35.47
2002–03	9.6	40.82
2003–04	12.5	40.19

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have been assisted research and development grants/Smart; and to what value in each *(a)* region and *(b)* constituency since 2000. [200536]

Nigel Griffiths: The following table shows the number and value of Smart and research and development grants by region. Data are not available by constituency.

Number and value of offers: Smart and grant for research and development

	2000–01[1]		2001–02[2]		2002–03[2]		2003–04[2]	
	Number	Value (£000)	Number	Value (£000)	Number	Value (£000)	Number	Value (£000)
East	59	3,994	81	4,854	167	9,771	174	12,355
East Midlands	35	1,925	47	1,940	69	4,933	64	3,830
London	14	852	38	1,752	63	3,815	109	7,697
North East	10	542	17	1,162	36	1,518	37	2,284
North West	62	3,803	111	5,824	134	6,889	145	8,251
South East	77	5,586	103	6,232	198	9,886	203	12,916
South West	26	1,624	66	3,577	65	2,398	46	2,714
West Midlands	48	2,486	62	3,091	43	2,392	36	2,743
Yorks and Humber	50	3,297	90	4,993	98	4,787	105	6,638

[1] Excludes Smart Technology Reviews and Studies, Micro and Exceptional Projects which were centrally administered.
[2] Excludes Smart Technology Reviews and Studies which were centrally administered.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many organisations have been assisted by the Phoenix Fund; and to what value in each *(a)* region and *(b)* constituency since 2000. [200538]

Nigel Griffiths: The Phoenix Fund provides funding to enable business support organisations to undertake a range of measures to promote enterprise in disadvantaged areas and under-represented groups. The number of organisations and the amount of funding that they have been awarded, by region, is as follows:

Region	Number of organisations receiving funding	Amount of funding awarded (£)
Eastern	10	5,380,000
East Midlands	20	5,820,000
London	43	18,100,000
North East	21	5,180,000
North West	38	13,980,000
South East	11	3,350,000
South West	22	6,740,000
West Midlands	28	9,100,000
Yorkshire and The Humber	28	11,700,000

With this funding, the organisations have to date helped in the creation of over 8,400 new businesses, assisted some 9,600 existing enterprises and provided over 1,800 loans to the value of £11,300,000.

As organisations work across constituency boundaries, it is not possible to provide information on a constituency basis.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have been assisted by Enterprise Grants; and to what value in each *(a)* region and *(b)* constituency since 2000. [200539]

Nigel Griffiths: The number of Enterprise Grants awarded and the value of payments made in each region from 2000 are as follows:

	April 2000 to March 2004	
Region	Number of grants awarded	Value of payments (£000)
East	47	764
East Midlands	233	4560
London	48	950
North East	416	8652
North West	461	8317
South East	152	2586
South West	92	1423
West Midlands	255	5205
Yorkshire and Humber	349	6931

The number of businesses assisted may be slightly lower than the number of grants awarded as a small number of businesses may have received more than one grant. Corresponding data for each constituency are not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

As organisations work across constituency boundaries, it is not possible to provide information on a constituency basis.

Better Regulation Task Force

Mr. Bailey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the representation from manufacturing industry is on the Better Regulation Task Force. [200228]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

The Better Regulation Task Force is a Cabinet Office sponsored non-departmental public body (NDPB).

Members of the Better Regulation Task Force are appointed for their experience and expertise, not as representatives of a particular sector. At present, there is one member of the Task Force with experience in the manufacturing sector. Full details of all Task Force members can be found on their website at www.brtf.gov.uk.

Civil Space Technology

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial contribution her *(a)* Department, *(b)* non-departmental public bodies and *(c)* research councils made to civil space technology in 2004–05; and what financial provision has been made for the period 2005–06 to 2009–10. [200543]

Ms Hewitt: My Department plans to spend £32.9 million in 2004–05 on civil space activities. With changes to DTI funding arrangements it is not possible separately to identify space technology funding. The Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council will spend £68.8 million on civil space activities and the Natural Environment Research Council will spend £52.5 million. I am not aware of any other financial contributions by non-departmental public bodies. Financial provisions for subsequent years have not been settled, but are likely to be of the same order in 2005–06.

Clean-coal Technology

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has

had with representatives of the coal generating industry about fitting clean-coal technology; and if she will make a statement. [200737]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* Although Ministers have not recently had any formal discussions with the coal-fired power generation industry about cleaner coal technologies, DTI officials have been in frequent touch with the companies in this sector and Ministers have had broader meetings which included reference to FGD. In particular representatives from E.ON and RWE sit on the Advisory Committee for Carbon Abatement Technologies which meets about every two months.

We are currently developing a Carbon Abatement Technology Strategy for Fossil Fuel Power Generation which will include support for new cleaner coal technologies. We plan to publish this early next year.

Miners' Compensation

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she last met representatives of the Law Society to discuss solicitors' fees for coal health compensation claims. [200067]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The Department continues to hold discussions with the Law Society of England and Wales on a regular basis regarding the coal health schemes. The last such discussion took place in October. We aim to meet with them again early in the new year.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what guidance the Department has issued on the practice of solicitors farming out work under the coalminers compensation scheme. [200923]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The Department has not issued guidance in relation to this. Solicitors have a professional code which is supervised by the Law Society.

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many miners and widows have been paid less than £2,000 in settlements for *(a)* vibration white finger and *(b)* chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in Midlothian. [200205]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 21 November 2004 the figures are:

	Number of claimants paid less than £2,000 in settlement
COPD	414
VWF	153

Note:
Statistics represent the total damages on claims settled by payment.

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid to solicitors in Scotland for vibration white finger claims since the scheme came into operation. [200206]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 21 November 2004, the total costs paid to solicitors in Scotland is £5 million.

Consumer Direct

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much it has cost to make the Consumer Direct telephone advice service available in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* South West England, *(c)* Wales, *(d)* Yorkshire and the Humber and *(e)* total; and how many inquiries have been handled in each region. [200548]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The cost for making the new consumer advice and information service, Consumer Direct, available in Scotland, South West, Wales and Yorkshire and Humber cannot be broken down per region/nation. But the overall budget for developing the service and launching it in the first four regions/nations is £3 million for financial year 2003–04 and £12 million for financial year 2004–05. The figure for 2004–5 includes both one offset-up costs, the cost of running the service on an ongoing basis in all four regions, and also central overheads such as IT development, telephony and quality assurance.

The Consumer Direct Scotland was launched on 12 July 2004 and has answered 39,007 calls. Consumer Direct Yorkshire and the Humber was launched on 23 August 2004 and has answered 47,568 calls. Wales launched 8 September 2004 and has answered 31,687 calls and Consumer Direct South West launched on 15 September 2004 and has dealt with 37313 calls. These figures cover the period from launch up to 27 November 2004, not to the end of the financial year.

I am pleased to say that the early performance of the service has been most encouraging in all four regions. Initial feedback from the first customer satisfaction surveys indicates an overall satisfaction rate of 85 per cent.; 79 per cent. said that the advice received from Consumer Direct had helped resolve the matter they were calling about; and over 90 per cent. would recommend Consumer Direct to a friend.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry at what cost the Consumer Direct website was set up; how much it costs each year; and how many people have visited the site. [200549]

Ms Hewitt: The Consumer Direct website (www.consumerdirect.gov.uk) cost £112,000 to set up and its annual running costs will not exceed £25,000. Since 1 September 2004 there have been 49,901 visitors to the website.

COT3 Settlements

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the likely effects of amending the law so that unpaid COT3 settlements accrue interest on the same basis as awards made by employment tribunals; and if she will make a statement. [200192]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The terms of a COT3 settlement are for negotiation and agreement between the parties, with the active involvement of a conciliation officer. It is already open to an employee, as a condition of agreeing a COTS settlement, to require that provision be made for interest to accrue if any amount payable under that settlement is unpaid after a given period.

Departmental Five Year Programme

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what role was played by her Department's special advisors in the drafting and production of the Five Year Programme published by her Department on 17 November. [200950]

Ms Hewitt: Special advisers provided advice to the Secretary of State and Ministers and commented on drafting by officials during the development and production of the programme.

Dial-up Internet Scams

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what plans she has to provide consumers with protection against fraudulent dial-up internet scams; and if she will make a statement. [200957]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has asked the communications regulator the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to review the role and powers of ICSTIS in premium rate regulation in view of the consumer harm caused by fraudulent dial-up internet scams. Ofcom is due to report back shortly. The Department will consider Ofcom's recommendations, and will be involved in implementing them.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what estimate she has made of the number of people affected by dial-up internet scams in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [200958]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Premium Rate Services are regulated by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS). ICSTIS received around 60,000 complaints between August 2003 and July 2004, of which approximately two thirds were related to internet diallers.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what discussions she has had with the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) about the growth of dial-up internet scams and premium rate number diallers; and if she will make a statement. [200959]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has had several discussions with ICSTIS about the growth of such scams and diallers in recent months.

Employment Tribunals

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what the average award for compensation in employment tribunal cases was in the UK in each year between 1992 and 1996. [200947]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Between 1992 and 1996 the Employment Tribunals Service only collected compensation statistics for tribunal cases covering the jurisdictions for Unfair Dismissal, Race Discrimination and Sex Discrimination. Therefore, the figures quoted in the tables illustrate the average award for compensation in Employment Tribunal cases for the UK (excluding Northern Island) since 1992 in relation to the aforementioned complaints.

	Average award for compensation (£000)
1992–93	2,593
1993–94	2,801
1994–95	3,402
1995–96	2,510
1996–97	2,602

Energy Consumption/Emission Levels

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will publish the latest revisions to her Department's forecasts for energy consumption and carbon emission levels for the UK in *(a)* 2010 and *(b)* 2020; and if she will make a statement. [200714]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department of Trade and Industry published its latest revisions to projections for energy consumption and carbon emission levels in 2010 in a recent paper on the Department's website www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf. Further details of the carbon projections by source and end user will be published, for 2010 and 2020, in the consultation paper for the Climate Change Programme Review to be published in December. The latest projection of carbon dioxide emissions is 141.3 million tonnes of carbon (MtC) in 2010.

Equal Opportunities Commission

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims have been brought by people living in the Greater London area to the Equal Opportunities Commission in each of the last three years. [200312]

Mr. Sutcliffe: People do not bring claims to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The EOC provides information on legal rights, what options and steps are available to individuals, and advice on how to take cases to employment tribunal or court.

Fireworks Act

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the police on the enforcement of the Fireworks Act 2003. [200518]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My Department conducted informal, preliminary consultations and formal consultation exercises, which included discussions with the Association of Chief Police Officers and other police representatives, during late 2003 (prior to the making of the emergency Fireworks Regulation 2003) and throughout the summer of 2004, prior to the introduction of the Fireworks Regulations 2004.

Those discussions included matters of policy and practical issues in relation to the enforcement of certain measures in the proposed Fireworks Regulations—measures such as the possession of fireworks in public places by the under 18s; non-professional possession of category 4 fireworks; and breaches of the curfew on fireworks use.

Additionally, the Home Office have also communicated to the police guidance on their new responsibilities and the powers available to them in the course of enforcement.

IAEA Conferences

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government were represented at the conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency in *(a)* Moscow in June and *(b)* Beijing on 18 to 22 October; and if she will place in the Library the text of Government statements and submissions to each conference. [200222]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK Government were not represented at the IAEA International Conference on Fifty Years of Nuclear Power in Moscow in June.

The UK Government were represented at the IAEA International Conference on Topical Issues in Nuclear Installation Safety in Beijing on 18 to 22 October by officials from the Health and Safety Executive. No formal Government statements or submissions were made to the Conference.

Industrial Diseases (Nottinghamshire)

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims for *(a)* chronic bronchitis and emphysema and *(b)* vibration white finger were concluded for the constituency of Sherwood in (i) 2000, (ii) 2001, (iii) 2002, (iv) 2003 and (v) 2004. [199781]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* The figures are as follows:

	COPD		*VWF*	
	Settlements[1]	*Damages paid*[2] *(£ million)*	*Settlements*[1]	*Damages paid*[2] *(£ million)*
2000	148	0.5	171	1
2001	356	1.4	660	5
2002	781	3.2	893	5.9
2003	1,547	7.2	1,428	9
2004[3]	1,642	4.2	1,287	7.4

[1] Settlements represent claims settled by payment and by denial/withdrawal.
[2] Damages paid represents the total damages paid on claims settled by payment.
[3] Figures for 2004 reflect the position to 21 November 2004.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims for *(a)* chronic bronchitis and emphysema and *(b)* vibration white finger were concluded in Nottinghamshire in (i) 2000, (ii) 2001, (iii) 2002, (iv) 2003 and (v) 2004. [199782]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* The figures are as follows:

	COPD	*VWF*
2000	553	641
2001	1,560	2,235
2002	3,346	3,382
2003	6,617	5,474
2004	7,239	4,843

Notes:
1. Nottinghamshire is defined by claimants postcode beginning with 'NG'.
2. Settlements represent claims settled by payment and by denial/withdrawal.
3. Figures for 2004 reflect the position to 28 November 2004.

Industrial Tribunals (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases are waiting to be heard at industrial tribunals that cover the Greater London area; and what the average time before a case is heard at such a tribunal has been in the last period for which figures are available. [200309]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Employment Tribunal offices that cover the Greater London area are London Central, Stratford, Watford and London South. The numbers of live cases on 31 October 2004 were as follows:

	Live cases at 31 October 2004
Stratford	3,835
Watford	10,500

Note:
It should be noted that not all of these will necessarily result in a hearing.

The Employment Tribunals Service does not measure the average time for cases to be heard. The Agency has a key performance target of 75 per cent. of cases being brought to a first hearing within 26 weeks of the receipt of a claim. The year to date performance at the end of October 2004 for the above offices is as follows:

	Percentage
London Central	78
London South	91
Stratford	72
Watford	80

International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in the deliberations within the European Union in respect of the decision on the location of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER); and what plans there are for multinational responsibilities for the management of radioactive waste arising from ITER. [199697]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The negotiations on the location of ITER are proceeding; the European Commission has been given a mandate to finalise the negotiations. The

The partners are also negotiating the legal agreement on ITER covering management issues. Unlike nuclear fission reactions that generate radioactive waste the end products of the fusion reaction will be helium, which has no harmful effects; any radioactivity will be limited to the walls of the chamber the reaction takes place in.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment she has made of the threat of nuclear accident worldwide; and if she will make a statement. [201588]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: There is not a new assessment of the issue, however with respect to nuclear safety at civil sites in the UK, this is the responsibility of the operators who are regulated by the Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate. The UK has in place a stringent regulatory regime which provides for the application of high standards of safety aimed both at minimising radiation exposures from normal operations and at preventing major accidental releases of radioactivity at nuclear installations.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is nominated lead Minister under National Response Plan arrangements in the unlikely event of a nuclear accident overseas. The UK has in place measures for the early notification of an accident overseas and contingency plans to deal with such an event.

Plutonium Shipment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what role the UK Government played in *(a)* reviewing and *(b)* approving the security arrangements provided by the United States and France aboard the Pacific Teal and Pacific Pintail. [200716]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As UK-flagged vessels were used, the UK Government were responsible for the security of the shipment in international waters. At those times when the vessels were within the territorial waters of the United States and France, the main responsibility for the protection of the shipment rested with the United States and France respectively. The on-board security arrangements at these times were reviewed by the Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS) with US/French authorities and were approved as part of the overall Transport Security Plan for the voyage.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was *(a)* of investigations and *(b)* in administration to the UK Government in preparation for the transport of plutonium from the United States to France aboard the Pacific Teal and Pacific Pintail. [200717]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A number of Government by my officials, particularly in the Office for Civil Nuclear Safety (OCNS), who reviewed, co-ordinated and eventually approved the Transport Security Plan for the voyage. OCNS costs will be recovered by BNFL.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the transport ships, Pacific Teal and Pacific Pintail, were operating on Government service in recent movement of plutonium from the US to France. [200718]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The shipment of plutonium between the United States and France using British registered PNTL ships was a commercial matter between the countries and organisations involved. The Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS) approved the security plan for the voyage whilst the ships were in international waters.

Post Office Card Account

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people have applied for a Post Office Card Account in each *(a)* region and *(b)* ward. [200550]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Information is not available in the format requested. I understand however from the Department for Work and Pensions that the latest information as to how many people have applied for a Post Office Card Account is available in the Library.

R and D Targets

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the planned Government expenditure on research and development is in each financial year from 2005–06 to 2009–10; what the expenditure is on *(a)* civil and *(b)* defence in each year; and what the planned Indicative UK contribution is to the European Union budget. [200541]

Nigel Griffiths: Planned Government expenditure on research and development (R and D) in 2005–06 is £9,293 million (in cash terms). Of this, £6,400 million is civil R and D and £2,894 million is defence R and D.

The Office for National Statistics collects data on Government expenditure on research and development via their GOVERD survey. Government Departments and Research Councils report on actual expenditures in the previous financial year, estimated expenditure in the current year and planned expenditure in the two subsequent years. Hence the latest year for which reliable, detailed projections currently exist is 2005–06.

The 2005 EC budget has not yet been adopted, the preliminary draft budget indicates a UK gross contribution of 17.91 per cent. before abatement. UK contributions to the EC budget for the period 2006 to 2010 will depend on a number of factors, including the size of the budget in these years. Traditional Own

Renewable Energy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives her Department is supporting to develop renewable energy provision in the South West region. [200650]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The development of renewable energy in the South West benefits from the range of initiatives which my Department has put in place to support delivery of the Government's target for 10 per cent. of UK electricity supply in 2010 to come from renewable sources. They include:

The Renewables Obligation, which places a requirement on electricity suppliers to produce a specified and growing proportion of their electricity from renewable sources.

Capital grants for renewables projects such as biomass. My Department is supporting a number of projects in the South West.

In addition, my Department has supported key regional partners (South West Regional Development Agency, Government Office for the South West, South West Regional Assembly) in the development of a regional renewable energy strategy for the South West of England. This sets targets for renewable energy in the region and contains an action plan showing how regional partners will work together to deliver them. A renewables agency, RegenSW, has been established in the region to oversee delivery of the strategy.

Retail Outlets

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research she has commissioned concerning ownership of retail outlets in the high street. [200935]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not commissioned any recent research concerning ownership of retail outlets in the high street. Competition issues raised about ownership of retail outlets are a matter for the independent competition authorities to consider.

Supermarkets

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with the Office of Fair Trading concerning the investigation of actions by the five major supermarkets in relation to their small and medium-sized competitors. [200988]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* The Department of Trade and Industry discusses a range of issues of mutual interest with officials of the Office of Fair Trading.

The OFT is currently carrying out an independent audit of the Supermarket Code of Practice. That audit is also examining Supermarkets dealings with their suppliers, and we expect the OFT to announce its findings shortly. It would not be appropriate for me to comment in advance of those findings.

Tesco

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations she has received concerning the share of the retail market held by Tesco. [200934]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Ministers receive a range of representations from members of the public, MPs and other stakeholders on issues related to supermarkets. Any competition issues raised in this sector are a matter for the independent competition authorities.

UK High Technology Fund

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial provision has been made for the UK High Technology Fund in each year since its inception; and what the uptake was in each year. [200529]

Nigel Griffiths: The UK Government provided a total of £20 million to the UK High Technology Fund.

This provision was drawn down by the UK High Technology Fund over two years:

	£
1999	3,000,000
2000	17,000,000

Wind Turbine Projects

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assistance her Department is giving to encourage UK firms to compete in the provision of wind turbine projects in England. [200964]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: There are significant opportunities for UK companies to win a share of the developing onshore and offshore markets. We are working to help UK companies win business in the very competitive wind turbine market. We have published a series of market reports which have identified opportunities for UK businesses and delivered a programme of meet the buyer events which has given UK companies the opportunity to meet the major turbine manufacturers and to discuss supply requirements. DTI also maintains close links with RDA's and regional renewable champions to assist in developing business and identifying inward investment opportunities—which can also create business for UK industry.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Equatorial Guinea

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what actions were taken to establish whether UK nationals were involved in the *(a)* October 2003 and *(b)* March 2004 coup attempts in Equatorial Guinea; and what the results were of the investigations. [199891]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the written statement I made on Equatorial Guinea on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 37WS.

European Commission (Departmental Press Releases)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the Whitehall Departments whose default setting is just to put out press releases attacking the European Commission as mentioned by the Minister of Europe in his interview with the Financial Times on 17 November. [200046]

Mr. MacShane: No.

European Constitution

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) why the official text of the EU Treaty on the European Constitution published by the EU differs from the version on the internet; and when he intends to place the UK Government's text of the treaty on the internet; [200475]

(2) how many versions of the treaty establishing the European Constitution his Department has published; what further revisions he expects to be made; and when he anticipates that a final version will be published. [200509]

Mr. MacShane: The Government have striven to provide Parliament with the most up to date texts of the EU constitution since the beginning of treaty negotiations. In doing so, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has published two versions of the treaty as Command Papers. These are the Convention's draft (CONV 850/03) and the Provisional Consolidated Version of the Treaty (CIG86/04) as agreed on 17 June at the European Council. Subsequent revisions of the treaty in light of the jurist-linguist process have been deposited in the Library of the House as they have been published. The most up to date versions of the treaty have also been posted on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk, the current version posted being the most recent, CIG87/2/04. The Government have now received the final treaty (the text of which is identical to CIG87/2/04) signed on 29 October and sealed on 8 November and are currently preparing this as a Command Paper to be deposited in Parliament as soon as possible.

European Union

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will announce the logo for the UK Presidency of the EU in July 2005. [200936]

Mr. MacShane: The logo will be made public in early 2005.

Hamas

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he had prior knowledge of recent EU discussions with Hamas; and what assessment he has made of the implications of these discussions for dealing with problems involving proscribed organisations under UK terrorist legislation. [200666]

Mr. Rammell: The Government were aware of EU contacts with Hamas before Hamas was placed on the European Union's list of terrorist organisations in September 2003. These contacts were to support Palestinian Authority efforts to improve security for both Israelis and Palestinians. Since these contacts ceased before the listing, they did not create a problem in relation to our national policy on contacts with proscribed organisations.

Nagaland

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* recent attacks on Christians and *(b)* the overall security situation in Nagaland. [200120]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The UK Government condemn the persecution of individuals or groups because of their religion or beliefs. The UK Government believe that the democratic process in India is the best protection for a peaceful and secure country. The Government have raised the issues of minorities with the Indian Government, and will continue to urge the Indian authorities to ensure that the right to freedom of religion is upheld, and that those responsible for attacks on religious minorities are brought to justice. The UK Government welcome the remarks by Dr. Manmohan Signh in his first press conference as Prime Minister, when he said

> "We are the most tolerant civilisation and we cannot divide people on the basis of religion and race."

The British High Commission in India continues to monitor developments in Nagaland. A ceasefire remains in place and this has led to a significant improvement in the security situation. A tragic bombing incident took place in Dimapur in early October, which we have strongly condemned. Although the culprits are yet to be identified local observers believe that the incident was perpetrated by outsiders and does not signal a general return to violence. Discussions are proceeding between the Government of India and one of the major militant factions on a political resolution of the conflict. The British High Commissioner visited Nagaland from 13–15 November to update himself on developments.

Turkey/Greece

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to Turkey about the recent Turkish *(a)* air force violations of Greek airspace and *(b)* coastguard violations of Greek territorial waters; and if he will make a statement. [199551]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no recent discussions on this issue with Turkey.

The Government welcomes the contacts which continue between the Governments of Greece and Turkey with a view to the consolidation of improvements in bilateral relations.

Vietnam

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organisation. [199565]

Mr. MacShane: The Government strongly support Vietnam's accession into the WTO. It believes the WTO delivers benefits for all its members, particularly developing countries. We are pleased that on 9 October the European Commission, which has exclusive competence in such bilateral negotiations on behalf of the EU, agreed bilateral access aspects of the WTO accession for Vietnam. The EU is Vietnam's biggest trading partner and is one of the first to settle bilateral access negotiations with Vietnam.

The Government will continue to support Vietnam's accession as it seeks to conclude bilateral negotiations with a number of other important WTO members (including China, Japan, Australia and the US). The Department for International Development is supporting analytical work on the accession tariff reduction options and possible implications for policies, including social and poverty impacts, in Vietnam.

Vietnam's terms for acceding to the WTO will be based upon the outcome of these bilateral negotiations together with agreement reached at the multilateral level within the WTO Working Party. If agreement is reached at both these levels then we hope Vietnam will accede to the WTO after the organisation's ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December 2005.

DEFENCE

EU Budget (Defence)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the EU budget the UK has agreed should be apportioned to defence and military operations. [200381]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: None. Expenditure arising from EU operations having military or defence implications is not charged to the EU budget, as set out in Article 28.3 of the Treaty on the European Union.

Headline Goal 2010

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what scenarios have been adopted by the EU military staff as a basis for force planning to meet the Headline Goal 2010. [200379]

Mr. Hoon: The following illustrative scenarios form the basis for force planning to meet the Headline Goal 2010:

Separation of Parties by Force

Stabilisation, reconstruction and military advice to third countries

Conflict Prevention

Evacuation Operation in a non permissive environment

Assistance to Humanitarian Operations.

Infantry Units

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) into which infantry units the 550 posts freed up from the four redundant regiments would be transferred; and how many are expected to be transferred to *(a)* logistics, *(b)* engineers, *(c)* signals and *(d)* intelligence; [200012]

(2) what the establishment figures are for the next three years for *(a)* logistics, *(b)* engineers, *(c)* signals and *(d)* intelligence. [200013]

Mr. Hoon: 537 posts will be reinvested back into the infantry as follows:

	Number of posts
Armoured Infantry	154
Mechanised Infantry	69
Light Infantry	257
Air Assault	48
Pathfinder Platoon	9

The establishments of individual infantry battalions have yet to be determined.

The Army is working on the detail for the Royal Logistic Corps, the Royal Engineers, the Royals Corps of Signals and the Intelligence Corps. Once the numbers have been finalised, I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Parachute Battalion (Deployment)

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when was the last time that a parachute battalion force was deployed on operations using parachutes as the main entry into the theatre; and what the theatre of operation was; [201004]

(2) how many in role parachute battalions there are in the Army. [201005]

Mr. Ingram: The last time a battalion of the Parachute Regiment deployed on operations using parachutes as the main entry into the theatre was during the Suez crisis in November 1956. As my hon. Friend will be aware, elements of the Parachute Regiment are traditionally held at very high readiness and are often among the first forces to deploy in any operational theatre.

I am sure my hon. Friend will also recall that approximately 1,000 paratroopers from the US Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade parachuted into Northern Iraq in March 2003 and seized an air field in Kurdish controlled territory less than 30 miles from the Turkish border; clearly demonstrating that this method remains a valid form of entry in to an operational theatre.

There are currently three battalions of the Parachute Regiment in an airborne role.

Regiments

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he intends to reduce the number of battalions in the *(a)* Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, *(b)* Royal Anglian Regiment and *(c)* Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment; and if he will make a statement. [200652]

Mr. Ingram *[holding reply 30 November 2004]*: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced in July, the reduction in the number of forces committed to Northern Ireland means that the overall requirement for infantry battalions can be reduced by four. This reduction will comprise one battalion from Scotland and three from England.

In addition, the decision to phase out the Infantry Arms Plot means that a new infantry structure is required. This new structure will seek to preserve the best elements of the regimental system while adapting to ensure operational success for the future. The new structure will be based on large regiments of two or more battalions. Details of the new organisation are still being worked through but we hope to make an announcement before the Christmas Recess.

Trident

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made on the future use of Trident. [200122]

Mr. Hoon: The Government's policy on nuclear weapons was set out in the Strategic Defence Review. I refer my hon. Friend to Chapter Four and Supporting Essay Five.

HOME DEPARTMENT

National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of members on the board of the National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction have expertise in the area of replacement. [200697]

Ms Hewitt: I have been asked to reply.

The National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction (NC3Rs) is committed to advancing and implementing the principles of all three of the 3Rs (Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of the use of Animals in Research). Membership of its Board is intended to reflect this remit. Members are appointed in a personal capacity and have expertise in a range of issues relating to the 3Rs, including five members with experience in replacement alternatives. When additional expertise in any area is needed this will be sought through consultation.

HEALTH

Asthma

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the asthma indicators in the Quality and Outcomes Framework for general practitioners; and if he will make a statement. [201509]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has not received any formal representations on the asthma indicators in the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF).

An independent review group is being established to make recommendations for changes to the QOF. Recommendations which are agreed can be implemented from April 2006.

The independent review group has being set up by the Employers Organisation (EO), on behalf of the Department. As far as we are aware, the EO has not yet received any representations on the asthma indicators in the QOF.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will include criteria on self-management and inhaler technique in the asthma indicators in the Quality and Outcomes Framework; and if he will make a statement. [201510]

Mr. Hutton: The Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) indicator Asthma 6 provides up to 20 points, worth £1,550 to an average practice, to practices which ensure that their patients with asthma have an asthma review every 15 months. The QOF supplementary documents state that this asthma review should include the assessment of inhaler technique and the creation of a personalised care plan, which may include self-management, where appropriate.

In addition, QOF indicator chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), provides up six points, worth £465 to an average practice, to practices which ensure that their patients with COPD who are receiving inhaled treatment have their inhaler technique checked every 27 months.

Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many *(a)* managers and *(b)* other staff resigned from Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003; [201468]

(2) how many *(a)* managers and *(b)* staff had their duties reassigned by Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003. [201470]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information about the number of managers and other staff who have resigned from Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust or had their duties reassigned is not centrally held.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust has in place to deal with complaints made to it by members of the public. [201469]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All national health service bodies, including NHS trusts, are required to have a complaints procedure in line with the National Health Service (Complaints) Regulations 2004, which came into force on 30 July 2004. Prior to the regulations, they were required by directions to have a complaints procedure.

The regulations are supported by national guidance published by the Department, and set out the statutory framework for the handling of complaints by NHS bodies, and the independent review of complaints by the Healthcare Commission, where local resolution has been unsuccessful in resolving matters.

The regulations require NHS trusts to have a written complaints procedure that is freely available to anyone who asks for it.

More information about regulations 2004, and departmental guidance is available on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many mental health beds were available in Buckinghamshire in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003; and what the average occupancy rates were in each year. [201471]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The average daily number of available beds and occupancy rates for Buckinghamshire is shown in the following table.

	Mental health beds available	*Average occupancy rate (percentage)*
2001–02	221	89.2
2002–03	261	89.0
2003–04	254	88.0

Notes:
1. The figures are only available for financial years rather than calendar years.
2. The figures are based on the three Buckinghamshire trusts—Buckinghamshire mental health trust, South Buckinghamshire national health service trust and Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS trust.

Source:
Department of Health hospital activity data.

Children's Hospices

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate his Department has made of how many terminally ill children are waiting to be placed in a children's hospice; [199880]

(2) how many hospice beds are available for terminally ill children in *(a)* England, *(b)* the South West region and *(c)* Dorset; and if he will make a statement; [199881]

(3) how many terminally ill children have died in each of the past five years in *(a)* a hospice and *(b)* a hospital; and if he will make a statement. [199883]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not collected centrally on the number of terminally ill children waiting to be placed in a children's hospice, the number of hospice beds available for terminally ill children or the number of terminally ill children who have died in hospital or a hospice in the last five years. The national service framework (NSF) for children, which we published on 15 September, is a 10-year strategy which recognises that high quality palliative care services should be available for all children and young people who need them. Children's hospices have an important place in the network of services that need to work together to provide palliative care. The NSF emphasises that services should be provided where the child or family want—in the home, or in a hospital, hospice or other setting. With the substantial growth money we are investing in the national health service and in the light of "National Standards, Local Action", our health and social care standards and planning framework, primary care trusts have the flexibility to plan how full implementation of the NSF will be achieved to meet local needs.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the time scale is for the implementation of the recommendations made by the Health Select Committee in its Fourth Report of Session 2003–04 on Palliative Care, HC454, with particular reference to palliative care services for children; and if he will make a statement. [199882]

Dr. Ladyman: Palliative care for children is covered in the national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity services, which we published on 15 September. As stated in the Government's response to the Select Committee report, the NSF recognises the importance of high quality standards and service provision in the transition from adolescent to adult services and that parents of children with a terminal illness may require additional support. We have set a 10-year time scale for the full implementation of the NSF. With the substantial growth money we are investing in the NHS and in the light of "National Standards, Local Action", our health and social care standards and planning framework, primary care trusts have the flexibility to plan how full implementation of the NSF will be achieved to meet local needs.

Community Pharmacy Contract

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the new community pharmacy contract will incorporate elements of the pharmaceutical public health strategy, as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 45. [199446]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new pharmacy contractual framework is being implemented from April 2005. It provides a sound platform for community pharmacy to expand its contribution to improving health, working at the heart of local communities. The framework provides real opportunities to offer health messages and advice on matters such as stopping smoking, diet, alcohol and physical activity to people presenting prescriptions with, for example, diabetes, coronary heart disease and supporting people in making healthy lifestyle choices to improve their health.

The strategy for pharmaceutical public health will be published in 2005. It will demonstrate how all pharmacists, their staff and the premises in which they work can contribute to improving health and reducing health inequalities. Following publication, we will invite the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and National Health Service Confederation to consider with us any further necessary steps to ensure the new contractual framework fully reflects the strategy.

Diabetes

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make a statement on the European Council of Health Ministers' statement on diabetes; and if there will be a similar Council statement after the next meeting in December. [200040]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The European Council of Health Ministers' statement described the health impacts of diabetes, its risk factors, and the predicted rise in prevalence of the condition across Europe. Using cardiovascular disease and cancer strategies as examples, the paper also suggested a European strategy for diabetes.

We are aware that the incidence of diabetes is rising. The national service framework (NSF) for diabetes aims to provide a world-class service for people with diabetes in England. The diabetes NSF was published in two parts: the standards document, published in December 2001, set out 12 standards in nine areas, covering the prevention, identification and management of diabetes, and surveillance for and management of its complications. The delivery strategy, published in January 2003, builds on the standards and offers the framework for a systematic programme of reform. The delivery strategy advocates how local progress can be made to ensure that the national health service is able to reach the NSF Standards by 2013.

I understand there are no plans to make a similar statement at the Council's next meeting.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200173]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 10–11W.

Food Additives

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the effects of over-consumption of *(a)* potassium sorbate and *(b)* sodium benzoate; and if he will make a statement. [200423]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The authorisation process for food additives, including potassium sorbate and sodium benzoate, is designed to protect against over consumption. An acceptable daily intake (ADI) is established, by independent experts, which represents the amount of the additive that can be consumed daily over a lifetime without appreciable risk to health. For many food additives, including potassium sorbate and sodium benzoate, strict limits are set on the amount that can be added to different types of food to ensure that ADIs are not exceeded.

Fuel Poverty

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the impact of fuel poverty on health; and what research his Department has *(a)* received and *(b)* supported into the impact of fuel poverty interventions on health. [200555]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is well known that fuel poverty is a significant contributor to excess winter mortality. In addition, it is likely that there are other more subtle effects on health arising from fuel poverty.

The Department is represented on the steering group of the health impact evaluation of "Warm Front", jointly commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Welsh Assembly. Its objectives are

> To evaluate the impact of key "Warm Front" interventions on householders' quality of life, mental and physical health, and risk of cold-related death.
>
> To identify the potential of energy efficiency measures in general to improve householders' health and quality of life.
>
> To assess the impact of key "Warm Front" interventions on the utilisation of health care services.

Health Poverty Index

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what ways the Health Poverty Index, as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 28, will differ from the health deprivation and disability domain indices contained within the Index of Multiple Deprivation produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. [199447]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Poverty Index includes the same indicators of the state of health and disability contained in the Index of Multiple Deprivation plus additional indicators, not available in the Index of Multiple Deprivation that measures the potential for good health or the risk of ill health. The Health Poverty Index is now available at http://www.hpi.org.uk.

Health Trainers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate his Department has made of the cost of employing NHS accredited health trainers; [199472]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of NHS health trainers, as defined in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, which will be needed to provide universal access for those entitled to NHS care for this service; and what criteria NHS health trainers will be required to meet to obtain accreditation; [199473]

(3) what consultation his Department has had with *(a)* primary care and *(b)* general practice bodies on the establishment of NHS health trainers; and if he will make a statement. [199476]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Choosing Health consultation prompted many recommendations from specialist task groups and responses from organisations and the wider public. Representatives from primary care were involved in the primary care task group and responses to the Choosing Health consultation document were received from across the national health service.

A key theme in the recommendations and replies was the need to promote health and healthy lifestyles and for the NHS to take a lead. As a response to those views, the

White Paper, Choosing Health, announced the establishment of NHS health trainers. We will be working with the Faculty of Public Health and other appropriate professional bodies as the detailed plans for NHS health trainers are developed.

From 2006, NHS trainers will be providing support to people in disadvantaged areas and progressively from 2007 across the country. This will involve a mix of full and part-time accredited NHS trainers and others, for example, trainers working in the voluntary sector, some of whom could carry out this role as part of their main job. There is no firm figure for the total number of accredited trainers as there will be a number of different models for delivering this service. During 2005–06, we will be piloting local models.

The method of accreditation will be based on completion of formal training with built-in standards and quality assurance.

The planning assumption, based on existing evidence and best practice, is that they will be broadly similar in salary and related employer costs to health care assistants and other NHS staff with comparable skills.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS health trainer will be a title protected by the Health Professions Council; and if he will make a statement. [199474]

Mr. Hutton: When the role of national health service health trainer is established and the competences and training agreed, it will be a matter for the Health Professions Council, as independent statutory regulator, to consider whether to recommend regulation with protection of title. The health trainer role will be piloted in spearhead primary care trusts from 2005.

Hospital Capacity

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he will take to ensure that hospital capacity matches increased demand in areas designated for high levels of new house building. [199497]

Mr. Hutton: It is for strategic health authorities (SHAs) to ensure that capacity is in place to meet the needs of their local population and deliver the 2005–06 to 2006–07 planning framework.

To support this, the Department, with SHAs, has developed guidance for local capacity planning. This recommends that, as a basis for capacity planning, SHAs need to model demand for services, including understanding changes to population and demographics. This guidance is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/28/32/04082832.pdf.

The Department allocates revenue funding to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. A weighted capitation formula is used to calculate PCT's target shares of available resources, based on population size, age and additional need, and unavoidable geographical variations in the cost of providing services, which then

As announced to Parliament on 15 March 2004, an extra £20 million, per annum, of revenue funding in 2004–05 and 2005–06 will be allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) and £20 million of capital resources in 2005–06 will be allocated to SHAs.

The Department has also agreed to give priority to Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) growth areas for future local improvement finance trust schemes and to include a growth area adjustment for ODPM growth areas in the next round of PCT allocations.

Mental Health

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many mentally ill young people aged between 16 and 18 years are held under the Mental Health Act 1983; what proportion of these people are held on adult psychiatric wards; and if he will make a statement. [199755]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected centrally.

In the three years to March 2006, we are investing some £300 million in child and adolescent mental services (CAMHS). Our plans to increase CAMHS provision will reduce the incidence of placing children and young people on adult psychiatric wards, but will take time to eliminate.

Placing adolescents on adult psychiatric wards is sometimes necessary and acceptable for clinical or practical reasons. Our plans to increase CAMHS provision will help deliver the marker of good practice in the children's national service framework which states that

> '. . . young people who require admission to hospital for mental health care have access to appropriate care in an environment suited to their age and development'.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has undertaken into *(a)* demand for and *(b)* the supply of infant mental health specialists; and if he will make a statement. [199773]

Dr. Ladyman: No such research has been undertaken. The Department's 2003 child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) mapping exercise found that of all the children being seen by CAMHS professionals, 6.5 per cent. were aged four years and under.

We are committed to ensuring that CAMHS are able to provide high quality services for children in all age groups, including infancy. The children's national service framework recommends that:

> 'Primary Care Trusts and Local Authorities ensure that CAMH Tier 2 and 3 services with specialist expertise, are available to provide assessment and therapeutic support for infants/young children and their families to promote parent child relationships and address attachment difficulties'.

NHS Care Costs

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average time taken to complete an investigation into recompensing someone who has been inappropriately denied fully-funded NHS care was in

(2) what percentage of cases notified by 31 March of people who may have been inappropriately denied fully-funded NHS care have been completed; [201463]

(3) what the latest available figures for progress with restitution cases in continuing care are; [201464]

(4) what percentage of cases of individuals who may have been inappropriately denied fully-funded NHS care had been fully investigated on the most recent date for which figures are available; and in what percentage of cases investigated recompense has been granted; [201465]

(5) how many complaints he has received since 1 January as part of the ongoing investigations into recompensing people inappropriately denied fully-funded NHS care; and how many such cases have been investigated to completion. [201466]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has been working with all strategic health authorities to ensure that they have robust processes in place to clear any backlog of pre-April cases and to process subsequent cases thoroughly, quickly and efficiently. I have no additional statistical information beyond that included in my written ministerial statement on continuing care on 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 175–76WS.

NHS Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what forecasts have been made by his Department's work force planners of the number of additional medical and nursing staff over the next five years; and if he will make a statement. [200596]

Mr. Hutton: "Delivering the NHS Plan" included forecasts of expected growth in the national health service work force. By 2008, there are expected to be 15,000 more consultants and general practitioners (GPs) and 35,000 more qualified nurses and midwives. These expectations are headcounts and have not been broken down by year.

The expected increase for nurses and midwives has been achieved early. Between September 2001 and March 2004, the number of headcount nurses and midwives increased by 46,978 and between September 2001 and June 2004, consultants and GPs has increased by 6,719.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* general medical practitioners and *(b)* practice nurses there were in each strategic health authority for each year since 1997, broken down by (i) whole-time equivalent and (ii) headcount. [201524]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* hospital, public health medicine and community health service (HCHS) medical and dental staff, *(b)* consultants and *(c)* HCHS qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff there were in each year since 1997, broken down by (i) whole time equivalent and (ii) headcount in each (A) NHS Trust and (B) Strategic Health Authority. [201525]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

NHS Walk-in Centres

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new NHS walk-in centres his Department plans to establish; where the new centres will be sited; and which groups will be permitted to bid to run them. [201528]

Mr. Hutton: National health service walk-in centres are now an established service. There are 61 centres open and a further 21 in development by primary care trusts, with more to follow in future years. Alongside this, the Department has invited proposals from potential providers to establish NHS walk-in centres whose services will focus on the working population. The initial seven centres will be located in London, Leeds, Newcastle and Manchester.

Nosocomial Viruses

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nosocomial cases of small round structured viruses there were in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority in each year since 1997. [199921]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has a voluntary reporting system for outbreaks of gastroenteritis, including those caused by norovirus, formerly known as small round structured virus, norwalk or norwalk-like virus.

Since January 1997 to 25 November 2004, there have been 874 outbreaks of gastroenteritis in hospitals caused by norovirus, affecting 24,076 people. The information, broken down by region and year, is shown in the table. Data broken down by strategic health authority or month are not available. Studies of outbreaks of norovirus in hospitals suggest about 40 per cent. of cases occur in staff.

Table 1: Number of outbreaks of gastroenteritis due to norovirus in hospitals in England by region 1997–2004

Region	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*[1]	*Total*
East Midlands	0	2	1	2	0	4	2	2	13
East of England	3	1	3	14	13	52	12	6	104
London	1	0	0	1	10	33	4	2	51
North East	5	15	11	10	19	30	3	9	102
North West	5	3	0	12	26	72	25	16	159

Table 1: Number of outbreaks of gastroenteritis due to norovirus in hospitals in England by region 1997–2004

Region	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[1]	Total
South West	16	34	59	53	1	41	1	2	207
West Midlands	10	7	0	0	0	24	1	1	43
Yorkshire and Humberside	1	0	5	14	5	61	1	0	87
Total	52	77	91	110	76	374	51	43	874

[1] Provisional

Table 2: Number of people affected in outbreaks of gastroenteritis due to norovirus in hospitals in England by region 1997–2004

Region	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[1]	Total
East Midlands	0	18	12	48	0	300	21	15	414
East of England	62	234	272	258	439	1,470	184	118	3,037
London	23	0	0	17	256	932	276	108	1,612
North East	98	629	304	146	343	833	61	216	2,630
North West	196	23	0	470	472	1,655	236	416	3,468
South East	229	433	153	45	80	1,439	44	302	2,725
South West	272	696	1,312	957	100	1,853	126	425	5,741
West Midlands	284	152	0	0	0	1,635	18	21	2,110
Yorkshire and Humberside	25	0	148	544	57	1,524	41	0	2,339
Total	1,189	2,185	2,201	2,485	1,747	11,641	1,007	1,621	24,076

[1] Provisional

Out-patients (Travel Costs)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what help is available towards reimbursing travel costs for the transportation of children to hospital clinics for out-patient treatment following a serious operation, when the care and treatment required is not available locally. [209565]

Dr. Ladyman: The same help is available for both child and adult patients requiring help with transport to an out-patient clinic following a serious operation.

This is determined firstly by the patient's medical need for the use of the patient transport service, as assessed by a doctor, dentist or midwife. If the patient does not have a medical need for patient transport but is eligible for help under the hospital travel costs scheme, they should claim via the national health service trust, within three months of travel, for a reimbursement.

Paediatric Services

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many paediatric allergy specialists there are in England; and what the ratio is of paediatric allergy specialists per child in England. [199758]

Mr. Hutton: Paediatric allergy is a sub-specialty of paediatrics. Sub-specialty level data are not collected by the Department.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole-time equivalent medical staff there were in the NHS in England working within the paediatrics group of specialties in each year since 1992, broken down by region; and how many there were per head of population. [199922]

Mr. Hutton: The standard ratio used by the Department is per 100,000 population. The information requested is shown in the tables.

Hospital Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): Medical staff within the paediatrics group by Government office region and per 100,000 population: England as at 30 September

Number (headcount)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
England	2,819	3,106	3,350	3,892	4,011	4,344
of which:						
East Midlands	139	165	248	294	325	333
East of England	163	206	237	293	324	350
London	393	504	713	848	852	937
North East	116	149	191	221	251	272
North West	337	380	442	515	589	610
South East	283	355	421	510	601	655
South West	203	223	266	327	330	354
West Midlands	175	220	291	339	367	417
Yorkshire and the Humber	218	267	316	353	369	413
Other	792	637	225	192	3	3

Number (headcount)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
England	4,542	4,750	5,027	5,127	5,608	5,960
of which:						
East Midlands	347	355	368	378	402	425
East of England	381	382	403	431	482	498
London	989	1,108	1,204	1,227	1,354	1,407
North East	272	294	324	343	337	355

Number (headcount)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
North West	656	670	736	695	731	801
South East	694	698	730	734	796	827
South West	387	391	407	410	479	485
West Midlands	404	434	433	443	496	554
Yorkshire and the Humber	412	418	422	466	531	608
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—

Number per 100,000 population

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
England	5.9	6.5	6.9	8.0	8.3	8.9
of which:						
East Midlands	3.4	4.1	6.1	7.2	7.9	8.1
East of England	3.2	4.0	4.6	5.6	6.2	6.6
London	5.8	7.4	10.4	12.3	12.2	13.4
North East	4.5	5.7	7.4	8.6	9.7	10.6
North West	4.9	5.6	6.5	7.5	8.6	9.0
South East	3.7	4.6	5.5	6.6	7.7	8.3
South West	4.3	4.7	5.6	6.8	6.9	7.3
West Midlands	3.3	4.2	5.5	6.4	7.0	7.9
Yorkshire and the Humber	4.4	5.4	6.4	7.1	7.4	8.3
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Number per 100,000 population

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
England	9.3	9.7	10.2	10.4	11.3	12.0
of which:						
East Midlands	8.4	8.5	8.8	9.0	9.5	10.0
East of England	7.2	7.2	7.5	8.0	8.9	9.1
London	14.0	15.5	16.6	16.8	18.4	19.0
North East	10.6	11.5	12.7	13.5	13.3	14.0
North West	9.7	9.9	10.9	10.3	10.8	11.8
South East	8.8	8.8	9.1	9.1	9.9	10.2
South West	8.0	8.0	8.3	8.3	9.6	9.7
West Midlands	7.7	8.2	8.2	8.4	9.4	10.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	8.3	8.4	8.5	9.4	10.6	12.1
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Whole-time equivalents

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
England	2,559	2,833	3,070	3,551	3,680	4,018
of which:						
East Midlands	124	149	227	265	296	302
East of England	151	191	219	268	299	327
London	360	462	652	789	790	871
North East	108	140	178	206	235	258
North West	311	351	409	469	539	568
South East	243	314	379	444	526	588
South West	179	202	242	302	308	323
West Midlands	154	203	273	317	347	394
Yorkshire and the Humber	203	249	296	322	337	384
Other	727	572	194	169	3	3

Whole-time equivalents

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
England	4,196	4,365	4,590	4,645	5,155	5,516
of which:						
East Midlands	310	324	335	334	368	389
East of England	353	351	374	397	448	463
London	923	1,015	1,074	1,105	1,235	1,309
North East	259	258	304	321	314	330
North West	609	624	679	646	677	741

Whole-time equivalents

	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
South East	625	641	648	639	718	753
South West	355	356	372	370	441	440
West Midlands	378	406	408	409	460	526
Yorkshire and the Humber	384	389	397	423	493	565
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—

Whole-time equivalent numbers per 100,000 population

	1992	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*
England	5.3	5.9	6.4	7.3	7.6	8.3
of which:						
East Midlands	3.1	3.7	5.6	6.5	7.2	7.3
East of England	2.9	3.7	4.2	5.2	5.7	6.2
London	5.3	6.8	9.5	11.4	11.3	12.4
North East	4.2	5.4	6.9	8.0	9.1	10.0
North West	4.5	5.1	6.0	6.9	7.9	8.4
South East	3.2	4.1	4.9	5.7	6.7	7.5
South West	3.8	4.3	5.1	6.3	6.4	6.7
West Midlands	2.9	3.9	5.2	6.0	6.6	7.5
Yorkshire and the Humber	4.1	5.0	6.0	6.5	6.8	7.7
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Whole-time equivalent numbers per 100,000 population

	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
England	8.6	8.9	9.3	9.4	10.4	11.1
of which:						
East Midlands	7.5	7.8	8.0	8.0	8.7	9.1
East of England	6.7	6.6	7.0	7.4	8.3	8.5
London	13.1	14.2	14.8	15.1	16.8	17.7
North East	10.1	10.1	11.9	12.6	12.4	13.0
North West	9.0	9.2	10.0	9.5	10.0	10.9
South East	7.9	8.1	8.1	8.0	8.9	9.3
South West	7.3	7.3	7.6	7.5	.9	8.8
West Midlands	7.2	7.7	7.7	7.7	8.7	9.9
Yorkshire and the Humber	7.8	7.8	8.0	8.5	9.9	11.3
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes:
"—" denotes zero
n/a = not applicable. This is due to 'other' being made up of organisations which cannot be assigned to a government office region, therefore there are no applicable population data.
Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

Post Mortems

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he is giving to strategic health authorities and trusts in the south-west regarding the current capacity constraints in the carrying out of post mortems on babies and children. [199816]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is aware of the current capacity difficulties in paediatric pathology in the south-west of England, and is reassured that the local health community is taking steps to resolve them. More generally, the Department is addressing nationally the pressures facing this important subspecialty through initiatives to increase the number of histopathologists working in the national health service. These include the international fellowships programme, the histopathology training schools scheme and the conversion fellowships scheme. The latter is an innovative initiative to enable existing consultant histopathologists to re-train as paediatric pathologists.

Prisoners (Mental Health)

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people are employed to treat mental health disorders in each prison establishment. [201057]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not available. Most healthcare staff working in prison establishments will be involved in some way in the care and treatment of prisoners with mental health problems. We have met, and exceeded, the commitment in the NHS Plan that, by 2004, 300 additional staff would be employed to provide mental health services for prisoners.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what mental health programmes are available to prisoners upon release from prison. [201058]

Dr. Ladyman: Released prisoners can access the full range of mental health services available to the population in which they become resident. An important function of national health service mental

health in-reach teams working in prisons is to ensure effective through-care for prisoners with serious mental health problems, to be followed up by support from appropriate mental health services on release.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prisoners have been *(a)* diagnosed with and *(b)* treated for mental health disorders in each year since 1997, broken down by prison establishment. [201059]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not available in the form requested. A survey of mental ill health in the prison population of England and Wales, undertaken in 1997 by the Office for National Statistics, showed that around 90 per cent. of prisoners sampled displayed evidence of at least one of the five disorders—personality disorder, psychosis, neurosis, alcohol misuse and drug dependence—considered in the survey. There will, at any one time, be around 5,000 prisoners with a severe mental illness, although not all of them will be acutely ill.

Prison establishments and their local national health service partners are responsible for assessing the health needs of their populations and developing appropriate services to meet them. NHS-funded prison mental health in-reach teams were providing community type mental health services in 90 establishments in England by March 2004.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on incidence of mental health disorders amongst ethnic minority prisoners. [201060]

Dr. Ladyman: In 1997, the Office for National Statistics undertook a survey of mental ill health in the prison population of England and Wales. The report of that survey, Psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales (1998), a copy of which is available in the Library, included a range of information on the prevalence of specific mental health problems in black and minority ethnic prisoners.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of mental health service *(a)* provision and *(b)* interventions in prisons. [201061]

Dr. Ladyman: The current model of service, that of a community mental health team, used in prisons reflects the current model of choice in contemporary mental health services in the national health service. An independent academically led project to evaluate the effectiveness of prison mental health services has begun.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what programmes are in place to ensure swift identification of prisoners with mental health disorders upon arrival at prison establishments; and which prison establishments operate such programmes. [201062]

Dr. Ladyman: The Prison Service and the Department are introducing a revised reception health screening process designed to identify prisoners with immediate health care needs, or who are at significant risk of a serious health problem. The new process focuses explicitly on ensuring prompt and effective identification of individuals with mental health problems.

The new reception screening arrangements have been introduced at the following establishments in England: Durham, Eastwood Park, Feltham, Glen Parva, Holme House, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, New Hall, Wandsworth, Brixton, Bedford, Lewes, Preston, Styal, Wormwood Scrubs, Woodhill, Dorchester, Exeter, Lincoln, Norwich, Pentonville, Hull, Chelmsford, Nottingham, Hindley, Altcourse, Blakenhurst, Bristol, Brinsford, Gloucester, Highdown, Forest Bank, Onley, Shrewsbury, Stoke Heath, Elmley, Brockhill, Bullingdon, Long Lartin, Lancaster Farms, Wetherby, Wakefield, Holloway, Belmarsh, Full Sutton, Huntercombe, Reading, Werrington, Low Newton, Kirkham, Morton Hall, Foston Hall. Work is under way to ensure that the new arrangements are in operation at the remainder of establishments that receive prisoners direct from court by April 2005.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which prisons operate permanent community mental health teams. [201063]

Dr. Ladyman: The following prison establishments in England, 90 in total, have established community mental health team (CMHT) format services as part of waves one, two and three of the national prison mental health programme.

Wave one—introduced during 2001–02—Belmarsh, Birmingham, Brixton, Bullwood Hall, Chelmsford, Durham, Eastwood Park, Feltham, Frankland, Holloway, Leeds, Leicester, Pentonville, Wandsworth, Winchester, Whitemoor, Woodhill and Wormwood Scrubs.

Wave two—introduced during 2002–03—Ashfield, Bedford, Blakenhurst, Bristol, Brockhill, Dorchester, Exeter, Glen Parva, Holme House, Hull, Lewes, Lincoln, Liverpool, Long Lartin, Manchester, Moorland, New Hall, Norwich, Nottingham, Onley, Parkhurst, Portland, Preston, Rochester, Styal, and Wakefield.

Wave three—introduced during 2003–04—Albany/Camp Hill, Altcourse, Aylesbury, Blantyre House, Brinsford, Buckley Hall, Bullingdon, Canterbury, Castington, Coldingley, Cookham Wood, Dartmoor, Deerbolt, Doncaster, Dovegate, Drake Hall, Elmley, Forest Bank, Foston Hall; Full Sutton, Garth, Gartree, Gloucester, Haverigg, Highdown, Highpoint North/Highpoint South, Hindley, Hollesley Bay/Warren Hill, Huntercombe, Kingston, Lancaster Farms, Littlehey, Low Newton, Maidstone, Northallerton, Reading, Risley, Shrewsbury, Stafford, Stoke Heath, Swaleside, Swinfen Hall, Thorn Cross, Werrington, Wetherby, and Wolds.

All remaining establishments—wave four—have now received funding for the commencement of CMHT format services, although, for some, such funding has been provided to facilitate an assessment of service need rather than a fully functional service. Not all establishments will require fully funded CMHT format services. Establishments where the need was highest were targeted in waves one to three.

Public Health White Paper

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the Government have to extend the policy objectives set out in the Public Health White Paper through EU-wide action. [199852]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* The Government will be working within the European Union to carry forward action on relevant policy objectives contained in the "Choosing Health" White Paper. We will also be pursuing wider White Paper aims through the United Kingdom presidency next year, notably through the public health theme, "Empowering People, Reducing Inequalities".

Residential and Nursing Homes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many residential and nursing home beds were available in *(a)* England and *(b)* each local authority, at the end of each year since 1996–97. [200592]

Dr. Ladyman: Information showing the number of residential care home places in England and councils with social services responsibilities (CSSRs) for adults aged 18 and over, at 31 March for the years 1997 to 2001, and the number of nursing home places in England and health authorities for adults aged 18 and over, at 31 March for the years 1997 to 2001, has been placed in the Library.

Figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission and now the Commission for Social Care Inspection, but comparable details are not available.

Sexual Health

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will encourage health authorities to use both molecular and serological techniques to detect chlamydia trachomatis; [199433]

(2) what assessment has been made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* diagnostic accuracy of (i) serology and (ii) antibody testing for chlamydia trachomatis; [199434]

(3) if he will commission a comparison of diagnostic techniques for chlamydia trachomatis covering all possible samples on persons of different ages from different socio-economic backgrounds; [199435]

(4) how much was spent on *(a)* screening and *(b)* molecular techniques in relation to chlamydia trachomatis in each of the last five years; [199436]

(5) if the Government will use some of the funds allocated for sexually transmitted diseases on comparing molecular and serological techniques in relation to chlamydia trachomatis; [199437]

(6) what methods are being assessed for detection of asymptomatic and deep-seated chlamydia trachomatis infections which molecular testing cannot detect. [199438]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The latest evidence on the prevalence of chlamydia suggests that up to 300,000 sexually active 16 to 24-year-olds may have undiagnosed chlamydia, and addressing this is a priority for the Department, through the national chlamydia screening programme. The recently published White Paper on public health committed additional funding of £80 million to accelerate the roll-out of this programme by 2007.

Evidence shows that the use of urine tests for chlamydia, such as the nucleic acid amplification test (NAATs), is the most appropriate and sensitive method to use for the national chlamydia screening programme, where the test has to be simple, safe, precise, validated and acceptable to the population being screened.

The use of blood tests to diagnose chlamydia is undeniably useful in certain circumstances, for example, more detailed diagnostic testing in cases of infertility. The decision on the method of testing offered to patients, however, is a clinical one, made at the discretion of medical physicians, and will be made locally.

The Government have no plans to commission a comparison of diagnostic techniques for chlamydia trachomatis, nor a comparison of molecular and serological techniques.

The Department has invested £13.5 million in the national chlamydia screening programme over the three years 2002–03 to 2004–05, plus a further £7 million in 2004–05 to improve access to NAATs.

Telecommunications Masts

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans he has to investigate the potential health hazards of telecommunications mast emissions. [200132]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This year, the National Radiological Protection Board's (NRPB) independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR) reviewed all the research on possible health effects from exposure to radiofrequency fields since the Independent Expert Group on mobile phones and health (the Stewart Report) published in 2000. AGNIR concluded that "Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health." Exposure measurements are documented on the websites of the NRPB at www.nrpb.org and Ofcom at www.ofcom.org.uk.

The potential health effects of radiofrequency from mobile phone technology more generally are being investigated under the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research (MTHR) Programme at www.mthr.org.uk. Two projects within this programme have been designed specifically to investigate the effects of exposure from mobile phone base stations.

Summaries of ail the MTHR projects can be seen on the website.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service (Pay Negotiations)

Paul Holmes: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the estimated number of staff days in all departments, agencies and other civil service

organisations involved in conducting pay negotiations across the civil service was in the period April 2003 to March 2004. [200963]

Ruth Kelly: Responsibility for pay and appraisal systems, outside of the senior civil service, is delegated to departments and agencies. This information is not held centrally as any negotiations that take place regarding pay arrangements are the responsibility of individual departments and agencies.

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how the figures for *(a)* public service-wide additional costs for future service of £150 million per annum and *(b)* a public service-wide one-off cost of £3 billion to cover all past service in respect of the amendment of the pre-2002 Civil Service Pension Scheme to allow widows and widowers of civil servants who remarry or cohabit to retain their pension rights were calculated; how soon the additional costs would taper off; and if she will make a statement. [200023]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave him on 13 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 317W, which relates to the costs for public service schemes as a whole. Any change to Civil Service Pension arrangements would have implications for other public service schemes.

The costs for the public service schemes as a whole break down into the following elements:

(1) the cost of reinstating all widow(er) pensions already stopped following remarriage and

(2) the cost of not stopping pensions for

(a) existing widow(er)s

(b) future widow(er)s of pensioners and deferred pensioners and

(c) future widow(er)s of active members

The Government Actuary estimated "past service costs", that is, capitalised costs of items (1), (2)*(a)*, (2)*(b)* and the accrued service element of item (2)*(c)* at around £3 billion in the year 2000.

The future service element of item (2)*(c)* was estimated to cost an additional £150 million per year.

For the pre 2002 Civil Service Pension Scheme alone, it is estimated that it will take about 10 years for the cash flow in relation to current pensioners to peak and then begin to taper off. For current active and deferred members it is estimated that the cash flow associated with past service costs would peak in around 25 years and then begin to taper off. Future service costs would continue for between 30 and 40 years.

Equal Pay

John McDonnell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what *(a)* proportion and *(b)* number of departments, agencies and other civil service organisations carried out an equal pay audit or review in 2004; what steps are being taken in response to the reviews; and what plans she has for further periodic equality reviews. [200585]

Ruth Kelly: Every department and agency produced an equal pay action plan in 2003 as part of the Government's commitment to address the gender pay gap. Cabinet Office continues to encourage civil service organisations to monitor progress with their action plans and to review their pay systems following implementation of pay awards for equality proofing purposes.

Responsibility for conducting equal pay audits and reviews, outside the senior civil service, is delegated to departments and agencies. Information regarding more recent equal pay audits will be held at a local level.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many written questions for the Department were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201542]

Ruth Kelly: None.

Performance Assessment

John McDonnell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the difference was between average *(a)* men's and *(b)* women's performance assessment at each grade, band or salary range, broken down by (i) national and (ii) London rates in each department at the latest date for which figures are available; [200588]

(2) what the difference was between performance assessment by *(a)* ethnic group, *(b)* disabled and able-bodied and *(c)* part-time and full-time employees at each grade, band or salary range, broken down by (i) national and (ii) London rates in each Department at the latest date for which figures are available. [200589]

Ruth Kelly: Responsibility for pay and appraisal systems, outside of the senior civil service, is delegated to departments and agencies. The information requested is not held centrally as any analysis of performance assessments will be conducted at a local level.

Public Engagements

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many public engagements he has fulfilled since September. [201046]

Mr. Milburn *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: My recent public engagements have been:

9 November 2004(Speech to the Institute of Public Policy Research at the University of London.

11 November 2004(Regional visit to the south east.

23 November 2004(Speech at the Guardian Public Services Awards, at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

25 November 2004(Regional visit to Wales.

30 November 2004(Speech at the Lunch of the Association of Chief Executive of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), commission of Inquiry Report(the Guardian Newsroom.

In addition and from time to time I meet individuals and organisations outside Government.

Special Advisers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what responsibilities he has given to his special adviser; [201655]

(2) what hours his special adviser is contracted to work for him in his ministerial capacity; [201656]

(3) whether his special adviser is paid on a full-time basis; [201657]

(4) whether his special adviser works for *(a)* him other than in his ministerial capacity and *(b)* any other Minister; [201658]

(5) whether his special adviser takes part in non-civil service political activity during hours in which he is contracted to work for him. [201659]

Mr. Milburn: I have one full-time and one part-time special adviser. The adviser who works part-time also works for the Prime Minister. Both advisers are employed under terms and conditions set out in the Code of Conduct and Model Contract for Special Advisers. These documents set out details of working hours, involvement in political activities and duties and responsibilities.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Paul Holmes: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether her Department monitors the compliance of .gov.uk websites with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. [199618]

Ruth Kelly: There is no centralised system of monitoring UK Government websites for compliance with the W3C's "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines" and the accessibility levels they define.

The Cabinet Office published the "Guidelines for UK Government websites" in 2002 to assist public sector web developers with the application of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The Department has extensively promoted accessibility awareness and continues to keep web accessibility standards and technical developments under review. Responsibility for the application of the W3C's guidelines rests with individual Government Departments, agencies and local authorities.

We have recently updated the terms and conditions for the use of .gov.uk domain names to require all new websites to maintain the high level of accessibility detailed in the Guidelines for UK Government websites.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether her Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if she will make a statement. [199623]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office is responsible for 48 .gov.uk websites. 23 of these, including the main Cabinet Office site www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk, comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Under the Cabinet Office's Better Internet Project, all of the Department's websites will be fully WCAG compliant by mid 2006.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of local authority detected frauds resulted in prosecutions in each year since 1997. [200117]

Mr. Pond: The number of cases of benefit fraud detected is not available. The number of cases resulting in prosecution and cases resulting in conviction is in the following table.

Benefit fraud prosecutions by local authorities

	Prosecutions	*Convictions*
1997–98	n/a	700
1998–99	n/a	800
1999–2000	n/a	900
2000–01	n/a	1,100
2001–02	2,101	1,732
2002–03	3,187	2,503
2003–04	4,601	3,747

Notes:

1. Figures for convictions prior to 2001–02 have been rounded to the nearest 100 because they include estimated values for non-responding local authorities.
2. Figures for prosecutions which did not lead to conviction are not available prior to 2001–02.

Source:

From 2001–02 onwards the numbers are taken from local authority subsidy claim forms. Prior to this the numbers are taken from management information returns.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have claimed incapacity benefit in Pendle in each year since 1997. [201013]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefits claimants in the Pendle parliamentary constituency

May	*Number*
1997	5,700
1998	5,800
1999	5,400
2000	5,300
2001	5,600
2002	5,400
2003	5,300
2004	5,400

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures include all incapacity benefit (IB), severe disablement allowance and IB national insurance credits only cases.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter dated 26 August from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding the motability scheme. [201258]

Maria Eagle: I have replied to the hon. Member on 1 December 2004.

Disability Benefits

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people living in the London borough of Wandsworth are receiving the disability income guarantee; and if he will make a statement. [200306]

Mr. Pond: The disability income guarantee is paid by means of enhanced disability premiums through income support, jobseeker's allowance (income based), housing benefit and council tax benefit.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit information is not available below Government Office Region level.

The information for income support and income-based jobseekers allowance is in the following table.

Income support (IS) and jobseekers allowance (income based) (JSA(IB) claimants with an enhanced disability premium in London borough of Wandsworth at May 2004

	Number
IS and JSA(IB)	900
IS	900
JSA(IB)	[1]

[1] Figures are nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.
3. Figures include claimants in receipt of income-based JSA who would also be entitled to the contributory element.
4. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples

Housing Benefit Matching Service

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which and what percentage of local authorities have yet to implement the Housing Benefit Matching Service. [200167]

Mr. Pond: Of the 408 local authorities, Isles of Scilly is the only local authority that has not implemented the Housing Benefit Matching Service.

Low-income Households (Scotland)

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Department is on target to reduce the number of children in low-income households by at least a quarter by 2004 in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Midlothian. [200220]

Mr. Pond: The Government has a PSA target at the national level to reduce the number of children in low-income households by at least a quarter by 2004–05, as a contribution towards the broader target of halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020.

Between the baseline year of 1998–99 and 2002–03 the number of children in low income households has fallen by 500,000 before housing costs and 600,000 after housing costs. We will report on the target in spring 2006 when the data for 2004–05 become available. However, our assessment is that we are broadly on course to meet our PSA target.

Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in 'Households Below Average Income 1994–95—2002–03'. Data are not available below the regional level. Only poverty rates are available at regional level rather than numbers of children in low income households. It should be noted that year on year changes in these regional poverty rates are not statistically significant. The data show that progress made in Scotland over the entire period 1998–99 to 2002–03 was in line with progress made in Great Britain over the same period.

'Measuring child poverty', published in December 2003, outlines the Government's measure of UK child poverty for the long term. This new measure will begin from 2004–05. All publications listed are available in the Library.

Pathways to Work

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the nine areas piloting the Pathways to Work scheme have *(a)* been interviewed and *(b)* subsequently got jobs. [199617]

Maria Eagle: In total, there have been 5,600 job entries in the Pathways to Work Pilots to the end of August 2004. Of these 4,200 were in the first three Pilot Districts and 1,200 were in the four Pilot Districts in the second phase. The following table sets out how many Initial Work Focused Interviews have been attended and how many job entries have occurred subsequent to those Work Focused Interviews.

Work Focussed Interviews and subsequent job starts in the seven Pathways to Work Pilots

Pilot district	Initial Work Focused Interviews attended	Job starts
Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute	2,820	450
Bridgend, Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	2,920	420
Derbyshire	3,210	410
Gateshead	720	50
East Lancashire	1,270	90
Essex	1,380	60
Somerset	650	50

Notes:

1. The first three Pathways to Work Pilots commenced on 27October 2003, the four Pilots in the second phase of Pathways to Work commenced on 5April 2004.
2. Work Focused Interviews should take place at around 8 weeks after the start of the benefit claim. This means that majority of benefits starts in July and August will not be included in the data.
3. Initial Work Focused Interviews attended refers to the actual number of Work Focused Interviews that have taken place. Some individuals will have attended

more than one Work Focused Interview. These will be people who have started more than one benefit spell since the start of Pathways to Work.

4. Job Starts includes all recorded job entries plus Return to Work Credit (RTWC) awards for which no job entry is yet recorded. (By definition, an RTWC award must indicate that a job entry has occurred).

5. The total number of job entries is higher than that recorded in the table. This table excludes job entries achieved with existing clients who had already started to claim benefit before the start of Pathways to Work.

6. Job starts figures include job starts achieved through referral to New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) job brokers.

7. The job starts figures represent all job starts that have occurred subsequent to an initial Work Focused Interview within the same benefit spell.'

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on what assumptions his assertion that Pathways areas show twice the improvement in job entries of that in the rest of the country are based. [199788]

Maria Eagle: The improvement in the number of job entries in the Pathways to Work pilots is based on an analysis of the recorded number of job entries recorded by Jobcentre Plus, including those by New Deal for Disabled People job brokers, in the seven Pathways to Work pilot districts compared to non-pilot districts.

The number of job entries recorded between November 2003 and September 2004 in the three Phase 1 pilot districts was 88 per cent. higher than for the corresponding period in the previous year. This compares to an increase of 32 per cent. over the same period for non-pilot districts.

Pension Protection Fund

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make a statement on the statutory basis under which the Pension Protection Fund would be able to charge pension protection levies designed to incentivise participating schemes to opt for a predominantly risk-based levy. [200155]

Malcolm Wicks: During the transitional period, well funded schemes will be able to reduce their overall levy charge by opting to pay the risk based pension protection levy rather than just the required scheme based pension protection levy.

As more schemes opt to pay the risk based pension protection levy during the transitional period, the PPF will need to ensure that it adjusts the amounts paid to reflect the risk represented by those schemes who remain outside the risk regime. In this way we would anticipate that those schemes which opt only to pay the scheme-based pension protection levy will see the levy rate increase during the transitional period, thereby increasing the incentive for schemes to opt in to the risk-based regime.

The statutory basis for this is given under sections 175, 177 and 180 of the Pensions Act 2004.

Social Fund

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to transfer to the pension service the administration of social fund claims from pensioners. [199581]

Mr. Pond: All social fund applications are administered by Jobcentre Plus. We have no plans to change these arrangements. The pensions service will continue to ensure that pensioners have access to advice and help in completing the appropriate forms.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will estimate the number of eligible people who have not received backdated winter fuel payments for the first three years of the scheme; and what the value was of such payments. [200156]

Malcolm Wicks: We estimate that about 1.9 million people could have been eligible for backdated payments for the first three years of the scheme and about 1.2 million people have now been paid. There is no cut-off dates for these retrospective payments.

It is not possible to provide a reliable estimate of the numbers who have not claimed because the estimate of those newly eligible was based on sample data. It is up to the individual, where a claim is necessary, to decide whether or not to make that claim.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of self-employed electricians who will be required to register as a competent person by 1 January 2005 under the requirements of Part P of the Building Regulations; and if he will make a statement. [201565]

Phil Hope: It is estimated that there are about 61,000 electrical contractors in England and Wales. There is no requirement to register; it is for each one to decide whether or not to do so. Those that choose not to register and carry out notifiable electrical work in dwellings after 1 January 2005 will need to submit a building notice to the local authority detailing the work they intend to carry out.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the capacity of certification bodies to process the likely number of applicants to become competent persons under Part P of the Building Regulations; and whether compensation will be made available to applicants whose certification is delayed and who lose work as a result. [201566]

Phil Hope: The adequacy of the competent person operators to deal with applications to join the competent person schemes within a reasonable timescale was one of the criteria for authorisation of the schemes. There is no requirement to be registered in order to carry out electrical installation work in dwellings, no compensation will be payable.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to permit self-employed electricians who have applied for competent person accreditation in accordance with Part P of the Building Regulations *(a)* to continue working on jobs which were already under way before 1 January 2005 and *(b)* to continue their trade pending the availability of the certification inspector to examine and process their application. [201567]

Phil Hope: There is a transitional period in the Regulations on Part P. Any work contracted for or started by 31 December 2004 will not be within the scope of the requirements of Part P so long as it is completed by 31 March 2005. In respect of work that does not fall within the transitional arrangements it will be necessary to submit a building notice to the local authority until an application to join a competent person self-certification scheme is approved.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department has taken, and over what period, to ensure that self-employed electricians have *(a)* been made aware of and *(b)* been granted adequate time to apply for accreditation in accordance with Part P of the Building Regulations due to come into force on 1 January 2005. [201568]

Phil Hope: The Government issued a Consultation Document on proposals to regulate electrical installation work in dwellings in May 2002. All the electrical trade bodies were consulted on the proposals and would have made their members aware of them. The Government formally announced in July 2003 that they had decided to introduce Part P of the Building Regulations. Throughout this period there have been many articles about the introduction of Part P in the trade press.

The Government authorised five competent person self-certification schemes to which electricians could choose to apply in July 2004. All have been accepting and assessing applications since that time. Those electricians that applied in good time should have their application approved before 1 January unless it was defective.

E-delivery

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, how much money his Office has given to local authorities in North Yorkshire to achieve e-delivery. [200141]

Phil Hope: Each local authority in North Yorkshire has received £750,000 in Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) grants, and can expect to receive a final IEG grant of £150,000 in 2005–06. In addition, a grant of £750,000 was made for the North Yorkshire ICT Partnership. The amounts to £7,950,000 since April 2002.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200182]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 10W.

Gypsies and Travellers

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, if he will list the registered social landlords involved in providing and managing sites for Gypsies and Travellers. [201667]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The Government have stated their intention to extend the permissible purposes of the Housing Corporation, which will allow Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to obtain funding for the development and management of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what mechanisms have been put in place to enable people to appeal against sites approved for permanent Traveller sites on local authority land; and if he will make a statement. [201732]

Keith Hill: There is no third party right of appeal against a local authority decision to grant planning permission irrespective of whether the land is local authority land or privately owned land. It is open to any third party who is aggrieved by a local authority's decision to grant planning permission to apply for judicial review if they believe the decision was wrong in law.

Interested or third parties have opportunities to make their views known at the formulation stages of development and local plans. They also have the opportunity to make their views known on planning applications and subsequently if the application is called in by the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister or if the applicant appeals against a local authority's planning decision.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Traveller caravans there were on each unauthorised site in South Bedfordshire in *(a)* July 2004 and *(b)* July 2003; and whether these figures include those Traveller caravans on unofficial sites owned by Travellers. [200610]

Keith Hill: In the South Bedfordshire District there were 19 unauthorised caravans in July 2003, eight on unauthorised encampments and 11 on unauthorised developments of land without planning permission. In July 2004, unauthorised caravans totalled 28, all of these on Gypsies' own land.

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated annual cost will be of recruiting and hiring the 7,500 home inspectors to police home information packs. [200961]

Keith Hill: Home inspectors will not be recruited by the Government and will not have a role in enforcing the home information pack duties. The majority of the 7,500 to 8,000 home inspectors needed to prepare home condition reports will come initially from existing surveying and related professions and trades. This represents a significant boost to private sector employment and business opportunities. The cost of recruiting home inspectors will be met by the private sector. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is assisting with awareness initiatives aimed at publicising this new career opportunity. A highly successful conference and trade fair held on 25 November in the West Midlands cost £19,000 and was attended by between 800 and 1,000 potential home inspectors.

House Prices (Bassetlaw)

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average house price is in Bassetlaw; and what it was *(a)* five, *(b)* 10 and *(c)* 15 years ago. [201087]

Keith Hill: Estimates of average house prices at local authority level are only available back to 1996, with the most recent figures being the provisional figures for Q2 2004. Hence the time series in the table covers a more recent period than that requested.

Period	*Average price of residential property transactions in Bassetlaw, 1996 to Q2 2004 (£)*
1996	52,693
1998	55,574
2000	67,218
2002	88,576
Q2 2004	119,911

Notes:
1. The above figures exclude purchases by sitting tenants and any other transactions that were believed to be below market value.
2. For general reference, average property prices for all local authorities in England and Wales may be accessed on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at the following locations:
Average annual property prices by local authority from 1996:
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_609380.xls
Average quarterly property prices by local authority from Q1 1996:
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_609381.xls
Source:
Land Registry

Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what meetings *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department have held regarding the stock options appraisal in (i) Bedfordshire, (ii) Hertfordshire, (iii) Cambridgeshire, (iv) Essex, (v) Suffolk and (vi) Norfolk, broken down by local authority area; and if he will make a statement. [200488]

Keith Hill: There have been no ministerial meetings held with any of the local authorities in these areas to discuss options appraisal.

Officials in the Government Office for the East of England, and the Community Housing Taskforce adviser hold meetings with those local authorities in the region who are undertaking a stock options appraisal, and with their tenant representatives, on an ongoing basis to provide support and advice on conducting an effective options appraisal.

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average local authority rent charged by authorities within the Greater London area is for *(a)* a one, *(b)* a two and *(c)* a three-bedroom flat. [200941]

Keith Hill: The latest available estimates of local authority rents within the Government Office Region of London (equivalent to "Greater London") for the financial year 2003–04 are tabled as follows:

£

Property type	*Weekly rent*
One-bedroom flat	56.21
Two-bedroom flat	64.67
Three-bedroom flat	72.06

Notes:
1. The figures are unaudited.
2. The rental figures are based on 52 weekly payments per annum.
Source:
"Second advance claim forms" submitted by individual local authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Average local authority rents by dwelling type, 2003–04

£ per week *Local authority*	*Bedsit*	*One-bedroom flat*	*Two-bedroom flat*	*Three-bedroom flat*
London	49.56	56.09	63.94	70.85
Inner London	49.65	56.21	64.67	72.06
Camden	49.27	61.59	71.00	79.74
City of London	54.37	62.73	69.68	75.06
Hammersmith and Fulham	50.21	57.73	64.68	71.72
Hackney	45.74	53.31	56.44	61.69
Haringey	45.95	50.62	57.36	65.40
Islington	51.28	57.37	67.38	73.46
Lambeth	48.40	55.78	62.07	70.23
Lewisham	38.04	50.93	58.29	63.57
Newham	43.16	49.27	58.28	65.40
Southwark	51.57	55.73	58.75	62.63
Tower Hamlets	49.30	57.31	70.01	79.55
Kensington and Chelsea	51.95	63.84	83.19	90.64
Wandsworth	45.25	52.35	76.26	85.05
Westminster	60.00	72.93	87.78	101.05
Outer London	49.38	55.86	62.36	66.57
Barking and Dagenham	55.15	56.01	56.19	56.75

Average local authority rents by dwelling type, 2003–04

£ per week *Local authority*	*Bedsit*	*One-bedroom flat*	*Two-bedroom flat*	*Three-bedroom flat*
Barnet	45.79	52.71	61.59	67.05
Bexley	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Brent	53.09	60.38	68.30	72.47
Bromley	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Croydon	49.65	57.01	62.15	64.31
Ealing	46.20	57.52	63.79	69.42
Enfield	49.34	56.42	66.78	76.03
Greenwich	54.57	56.43	59.51	62.59
Harrow	63.09	65.85	69.30	72.13
Havering	41.54	44.13	51.34	55.71
Hillingdon	56.60	62.62	71.60	81.90
Hounslow	42.42	52.26	60.73	67.48
Kingston upon Thames	52.32	59.65	66.55	71.19
Redbridge	57.97	64.66	72.79	77.34
Merton	30.66	50.14	56.97	61.76
Richmond upon Thames	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Sutton	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Waltham Forest	36.87	50.32	65.62	80.73

[1] Not applicable (the local authority no longer owns any housing stock).
[2] No figures received.
Notes:
1. Figures are unaudited.
2. The weekly rental figures are based on 52 weekly payments per year.
3.
Source:
"Second advance claim forms" submitted by local authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent assessment he has made of the fourth option of direct investment in council housing. [200996]

Keith Hill: There is no fourth option for providing direct additional investment to local authorities to meet the Decent Homes standard.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much rent was paid by council tenants in England in the last year for which figures are available; how much of these receipts was spent on *(a)* repairs and maintenance and *(b)* management; and if he will make a statement. [200997]

Keith Hill: Data supplied to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by local authorities in England show for 2003–04:

	£ million
Rent due from council tenants	6,245
Major repairs expenditure	1,356
Maintenance expenditure	1,810
Management expenditure	2,092

Each authority has other items of income and expenditure and has a duty to budget to avoid an end of year deficit.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what his latest estimate is of the level of central Government financial support for *(a)* local government and *(b)* county councils, per head of population for each English county; and if he will make a statement. [199899]

Mr. Raynsford: The amount of central Government financial support provided to all local authorities in England in 2004–05 is £58,412 million. This equates to £1,172 per head of population.

The amount of central Government financial support provided to county councils by head of population in the same period is in the table.

	£ per head
Bedfordshire	722
Buckinghamshire	687
Cambridgeshire	603
Cheshire	698
Cornwall	792
Cumbria	824
Derbyshire	728
Devon	668
Dorset	598
Durham	847
East Sussex	716
Essex	706
Gloucestershire	684
Hampshire	643
Hertfordshire	753
Kent	775
Lancashire	766
Leicestershire	645
Lincolnshire	791
Norfolk	723
North Yorkshire	699
Northamptonshire	792
Northumberland	824

	£ per head
Nottinghamshire	756
Oxfordshire	698
Shropshire	699
Somerset	706
Staffordshire	707
Suffolk	726
Surrey	611
Warwickshire	684
West Sussex	625
Wiltshire	638
Worcestershire	666

Information has been supplied for county councils only and therefore excuses unitary authorities, shire districts, and police and fire authorities within the county boundary.

The all-England data for local government support include special and specific grants inside "Aggregate External Finance", police grant, Revenue support grant, redistributed non-domestic rates and general Greater London Authority (GLA) grant.

The data for county council support include special and specific grants inside "Aggregate External Finance", Revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates but not police grant or general GLA grant as they are not payable to county councils.

The figures for the county councils will not necessarily be comparable with each other because those which did not undergo a reorganisation between April 1995 and April 1998 will include support for fire expenditure, whereas those which did undergo a reorganisation will exclude such support.

Similarly they will not be comparable with the total figure for England as the latter includes support for all tiers of English local government.

The data are taken from the Revenue Account (budget) form for 2004–05—these forms are completed each year by individual local authorities.

Mersey Crossing

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what assessment he has made of the contribution that a new Mersey crossing may make to the economic growth of the north-west. [201584]

Keith Hill: The Department for Transport is expecting a full appraisal to be submitted by the end of this week. This should comprehensively assess the benefits of the proposal against the Government's key transport criteria of integration, economy, environment, safety and accessibility. Until the submission has been reviewed, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not able to comment on the robustness of the economic case presented. The timing of any decision will depend on our assessment of the appraisal and the issues that it raises.

Planning

Mr. Nick Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what account he takes of commercial factors in determining planning matters. [200292]

Keith Hill: The Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, set out his general approach to planning matters in Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG1: General Policy and Principles.

This policy includes the consideration of commercial factors, and states that a sustainable planning framework should provide for the nation's needs for commercial development, while respecting environmental objectives. It needs to be positive in promoting competitiveness while being protective towards the environment and amenity.

Development plans should encourage new enterprise and investment by setting out clear land-use policies for industrial and commercial development.

It is important that the locational needs of businesses are taken into account in the preparation of development plans. In defining suitable locations for development, plan policies should take into account:

the contribution to regenerating existing urban areas;

access to customers;

access to raw materials and suppliers;

links with the other businesses and the special needs of small businesses;

the workforce catchment area;

the availability of adequate infrastructure; and

various transport considerations including the particular needs of the freight industry.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice he was given by *(a)* the Secretary of State for Health and *(b)* the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as a result of the consultation on the preparation of Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control. [200973]

Keith Hill: Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control reflects the agreement of the Secretaries of State for Health and for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the purposes of *(a)* Planning Policy Statement 23 and *(b)* its annex on the development of land affected by contamination. [200974]

Keith Hill: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made on 3 November 2004 when I published PPS23, *Official Report*, column 9WS.

Priority Estates Project

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much sponsorship of the Priority Estates Project cost his Office in *(a)* the financial year 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [200514]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister paid the Priority Estates Project, by way of grants and other payments, the following amounts: £727,857 in 2002–03 and £1,020,963 in 2003–04 (both amounts include VAT).

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, (1) what the running costs of each of the existing regional assemblies were in the last year for which figures are available; [201355]

(2) how much his Department contributed to the regional assemblies in the last year for which figures are available; [201356]

(3) whether legislation is required to disband the existing regional assemblies; [201357]

(4) what discussions he has had with officials concerning the dismantling of the regional assemblies; [201358]

Mr. Raynsford: The total level of Government grant paid to the existing regional assemblies in 2003–04 is as follows:

	£million
East	1,874,000
East Midlands	1,631,000
North East	1,408,000
North West	1,837,000
South East	2,186,000
South West	1,613,000
West Midlands	1,671,000
Yorkshire and the Humberside	1,655,000
English Regions Network	200,000
Total Office of the Deputy	14,075,000

No details are kept centrally on the running costs of the assemblies.

The existing assemblies are voluntary bodies designated to undertake certain functions and no legislation would be necessary should any assembly decide to disband. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has not had any discussions with officials on the dismantling of assemblies.

Right to Buy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average *(a)* purchase price of and *(b)* discount applied to a right to buy (i) flat and (ii) house was in each region in England in (A) 1997 and (B) the last year for which figures are available. [200289]

Keith Hill: Average right-to-buy selling price (net of discount) and discount figures for each of the Government Office regions are shown in the table.

£000

	(a) Selling price (net of discount)		*(b) Discount*	
(A) 1997–98	House	Flat	House	Flat
North east	16.2	9.6	15.0	15.4
North west	18.4	9.8	16.8	20.7
Yorkshire/ Humber	18.1	11.0	15.9	16.6
East Midlands	18.0	9.9	15.9	15.5
West Midlands	19.3	11.0	17.6	16.8
East	25.7	13.8	24.4	20.4
London	33.2	21.4	30.9	31.1
South east	29.1	15.5	27.3	24.1
South west	21.5	11.8	19.9	20.1
(B) 2003–04				
North east	24.3	15.2	17.5	15.4
North west	26.6	15.6	19.7	17.5
Yorkshire/ Humber	24.5	17.3	18.1	18.5
East Midlands	38.0	24.8	22.0	21.1
West Midlands	35.2	22.1	22.6	22.4
East	63.6	43.8	31.0	32.3
London	106.5	75.4	34.6	38.0
South east	81.2	50.5	36.8	34.8
South west	54.8	34.4	28.6	27.9

Standards Board

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what budget was allocated to the Standards Board for England in each of the last two years; and how many staff were employed by the Standards Board for England in each of those years. [201728]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested in respect of the last two complete financial years is in the table.

	Grant paid to the Standards Board for England (£million)	*Number of staff employed by the Standards Board for England at the end of the year*
2002–03	6.514	105
2003–04	8.944	122

Superstores

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what research he has collated on the impact of new superstores on surrounding retail facilities; and if he will place it in the Library. [200332]

Keith Hill: The then Department of Environment Transport and the Regions commissioned The Impact of Large Foodstores on Market Towns and District Centres, published in September 1998, which looked specifically at the impact of large edge-of-centre and out-of-town foodstores.

Together with Marks and Spencer plc and the British Council for Shopping Centres Educational Trust, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funded research by the National Regional Planning Forum on secondary shopping areas. The report, The Role and Vitality of Secondary Shopping—a New Direction by CB Richard Ellis, published earlier this month, includes an assessment of the impact of superstores on the secondary shopping areas of large towns as well as district centres and small town centres.

A copy of each of these reports has been placed in the Library of the House.

Town Centres

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action his Department is taking to discourage the domination of town centres by larger store groups. [200570]

Keith Hill: The Government's objectives for town centres and retail development, include sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and maintaining an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sector. The Government are strongly committed to ensuring that town centres act as the focus of development, so as to provide easy access to a wide

range of facilities and services by a choice of means of transport but it is for the market to determine what form that investment takes.

However, it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, preserve existing commercial interests or to prevent innovation.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 6 December 2004

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Chief Executive (House of Commons Service)

Mr. Burns: To ask the honourable Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what qualifications the Chief Executive of the House of Commons Service has to fulfil his duties as Chief Executive. [201811]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Chief Executive of the House of Commons Service holds that post by virtue of his appointment as Clerk of the House of Commons. This arrangement was endorsed by the external reviews of the management of the House of Commons carried out in 1990 by Sir Robin Ibbs and in 1999 by Mr. Michael Braithwaite. I refer the hon. Member in particular to paragraphs 15.38 to 15.42 and Annex G of the Braithwaite Report (HC 745, 1998–99), which set out the rationale for that arrangement.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Arable Area Payment Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when Arable Area Payment Scheme payments are expected to be made. [200566]

Alun Michael: The payment window for the Arable Area Payment Scheme 2004 main payments opened on 16 November 2004 and closes on 31 January 2005. Payments commenced immediately the payment window opened and during the first two weeks 69 per cent. of claims were paid including 80 per cent. of claims from producers in those countries most affected by wet weather.

Bees

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the future of the bee health programme. [200426]

Alun Michael: The Department's Activity Baseline Review has identified the bee health programme as an area where 20 per cent. savings (equivalent to £250,000 p.a.) could be realised from 2008. We expect to make these savings through a reduced programme of expenditure with the Central Science Laboratory's National Bee Unit, which implements the programme in England.

We have discussed these proposals with beekeeping organisations, who have registered a number of concerns. We will take these concerns into account in developing and implementing the proposals.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department is taking to support beekeepers in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [200427]

Alun Michael: The Department assists the beekeeping sector in England through an integrated bee health programme administered by the National Bee Unit. The programme will cost £1.235 million in 2004–05. Measures include the provision of a free diagnostic and inspection service as well as training and technical advice to help beekeepers become more self-reliant in controlling pests and diseases through improved bee husbandry techniques.

This year, the Department also intends to spend some £240,000 on research and development to underpin our bee health policy in controlling endemic notifiable diseases in the UK and preventing the introduction of serious exotic pests.

Drinking Water

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* prosecutions, *(b)* cautions and *(c)* enforcement notices there have been in each year since 1995 brought by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (i) in total and (ii) broken down by region. [200709]

Mr. Morley: Since 1995 the Drinking Water Inspectorate has initiated proceedings for 35 prosecutions and issued 20 Cautions. The Inspectorate has also issued 8 Enforcement Notices under section 20 of the Water Industry Act 1991. The number of prosecutions, cautions and notices are summarised as follows, by year and by region.

Number of prosecutions

	Total number of prosecutions	*Prosecutions by Region*	*Number*
1995	2	Wales	1
—	—	West Midlands	1
1996	1	London	—
1997	4	Wales	2
—	—	West Midlands	1
—	—	South West	1
1998	9	Yorkshire and Humberside	1
—	—	Wales	3
—	—	North East	1
—	—	South East	2
—	—	West Midlands	1
—	—	North West	1
1999	9	East of England	2
—	—	South West	2
—	—	East Midlands	1
—	—	South East	2
—	—	North West	2
2000	5	South East	1
—	—	Wales	3
—	—	East of England	1
2001	3	South East	1
—	—	Wales	1

Number of prosecutions

	Total number of prosecutions	Prosecutions by Region	Number
—	—	East of England	1
2002	1	Yorkshire and Humberside	—
2003	0	—	—
2004 (To date)	1	East of England	—

Number of cautions

	Total number of cautions	Cautions by Region	Number
1995	1	Wales	—
1996	0	—	—
1997	0	—	—
1998	2	Yorkshire and Humberside	1
—	—	South West	1
1999	0	—	—
2000	8	South East	2
—	—	North West	4
—	—	North East	1
—	—	South West	1
2001	3	Yorkshire	2
2002	2	Yorkshire and Humberside	—
2003	3	Yorkshire and Humberside	2
—	—	Wales	1
2004 (To date)	1	South East	—

Notices of intention to serve an Enforcement Order under s20 Water Industry Act 1991

	Total number of Notices served	Notices served by Region	Number
1995	0	—	—
1996	6	East of England	1
—	—	West Midlands	1
		North East	1
		East/West Midlands	1
		South East	2
1997	2	Yorkshire and Humberside	1
—	—	South East	1
1998	0	—	—
1999	0	—	—
2000	0	—	—
2001	0	—	—
2002	0	—	—
2003	0	—	—
2004 (To date)	0	—	—

Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what further action she plans to reduce emissions of methane. [200690]

Mr. Morley: There has been a 42.7 per cent. reduction in methane emissions in the UK between 1990 and 2002, the most recent year for which data is available.

Methane is one of the greenhouse gases covered by the Kyoto Protocol. Following the decision of Russian to sign up to the Kyoto Protocol it is due to come into force on 16 February 2005. The UK remains on course to achieve its Kyoto target to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases by 12.5 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2008–12. Provisional estimates suggest that in 2003 greenhouse gas emissions were about 14 per cent. below the baseline.

A review of the Climate Change Programme was launched on 15 September. The review will evaluate the success of the existing policy measures in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and will examine the scope for further reductions in the future.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the volumes of methane likely to be released following the effects of climate change in polar regions; and what assessment she has made of the effect that the release of such methane will have on climate change. [200704]

Mr. Morley: There are currently large uncertainties in the estimates of present-day natural methane fluxes. There are also large uncertainties in the projections of changes in these fluxes under climate change, due both to the responses of methane emissions to warming and the changes in wetland area under climate change.

However, modelling studies performed by the Hadley Centre for the UK Climate Prediction programme funded by Defra indication that methane emissions from wetlands north of 45°N will approximately double by 2100 relative to the present day, from 50 to 95 Terragrams per year. It is estimated that this will contribute an additional 1 per cent. to global warming over the 21st Century.

It should be noted that this does not consider the potential release of methane from ocean hydrates, which has not yet been quantified, but is the subject of research within the Climate Prediction Programme.

Environment Agency Projects

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects that the feasibility/design stage of the Environment Agency project concerning *(a)* the possible raising of ground levels at the western end of Gossmore Close in Marlow and *(b)* the construction of flap valve/headwall of the existing highway ditch adjacent to Firview Close in Marlow will be reached; and if she will make a statement. [200657]

Mr. Morley: I understand that the raising of the ground levels at the western end of Gossmore Close is part of the Firview Close Area Study and has gone through a pre-feasibility study only. It is currently being considered for inclusion on the Environment Agency's Capital Programme.

The detailed design for the construction of a flap valve/headwall of the existing highway ditch adjacent to Firview Close is unlikely to begin before 2006–07.

As an interim measure I understand that Wycombe district council and Buckinghamshire county council have agreed that if another flood event occurs (of a magnitude that puts the properties in Firview Close at risk of flooding), they will make arrangements for an emergency headwall to be constructed across the highway ditch with the aim of protecting the properties from river flooding.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects that the feasibility/design stage of the Environment Agency project concerning the possible erection of an earth bund at the rear of Bream Close/Trout Close in Marlow will be reached; and if she will make a statement. [200658]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: I understand that the Environment Agency's pre-feasibility study for this area is now complete and has concluded that there is a viable project to reduce the risk of river flooding to the residential properties on the Pound Lane estate.

The preferred option is for construction of a substantial earth bund, commencing at the rear of Bream Close and extending in a north easterly direction to the rear of Trout Close. Feasibility and design for this proposal is now under way.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she has taken in relation to the conclusions of the Environment Agency feasibility study on the prevention of flooding in Medmenham; and if she will make a statement. [200659]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: Environment Agency (EA) flood risk improvement projects must meet specified economic, technical and environmental criteria and achieve the threshold priority score for the year in which they start in order to be eligible for funding from Defra's ring-fenced improvement allocation which is shared between all operating authorities.

I have not seen a copy of this feasibility study. However, I understand that the EA's preferred option is for a flood bund around the properties in Ferry Lane on both the east and west side of the road including the Abbey. I understand, however, the priority score for the proposal is relatively low and construction is therefore unlikely to progress in the near future. In the meantime the EA is working closely with riparian owners to ensure local watercourses are property maintained.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of her Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200186]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 10W by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Flood Prevention Schemes

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of flood prevention schemes undertaken since 1997 was, broken down by county. [199783]

Mr. Morley: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1482W. I plan to place this information in the Library of the House shortly.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures the Environment Agency is taking to hold back water in the upper reaches of the Thames. [201869]

Mr. Morley: I understand the upstream catchment currently supports significant storage of water within the confines of the natural floodplain.

The Environment Agency has a statutory duty to maintain water levels of the Thames within a range of +6" to -3" of Standard Head Water Level, marked at the head of each lock. To achieve this, the weir associated with each lock is operated to regulate the amount of flow through it, which will either raise or lower the water level of the reach above the weir. In this way the rate of flow of the river may rise or fall although the level of the river may remain much the same.

After rain, as river flows increase, weir gates are opened to prevent, or to minimise as far as possible, rises in water level. Water is not deliberately held back. When very high flows are experienced, they may exceed the capacity of the river channel at which point it overtops its banks even though the weir may be fully open.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Environment Agency is taking to dredge the upper reaches of the Thames. [201870]

Mr. Morley: I understand proposed dredging works are scheduled to take place at Marlow Lock tail cut in the winter of 2005. This programme of dredging was developed in response to the findings of the Summer/Autumn 2004 River Thames Reach bathymetric surveys.

In line with the Mechanism of Flooding Report recommendations, the agency is currently reviewing its position on the options and case for additional dredging. This work includes: searching for new disposal sites for the dredging (including reprocessing), reviewing environmental implications and recalculating the potential benefits and costs to assess the economic justification of further dredging. This report will be concluded in spring 2005.

Hazardous Waste Sites

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria were used in determining which sites would be eligible to deal with hazardous waste; and if she will make a statement [200088]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* With the ending of the co-disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste in landfills, operators had to decide on the classification for each of their landfill sites post 16 July 2004. For those sites that choose to be designated as hazardous waste landfills, operators had to apply to the Environment Agency for a permit that contained the operating conditions for the site. The Agency had to then decide whether a permit should be issued and, if so, what operating conditions should be applied.

The requirements for a hazardous waste landfill are set out in the Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002, as amended by the Landfill (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 and related Pollution Prevention and Control Legislation. Those sites designated as hazardous but have yet to complete the permitting process, can continue to accept hazardous waste under the terms of its waste management licence until such time as a decision on the permit application is made. The Environment Agency is unable to issue a permit unless the necessary planning permissions are in place.

Government Ministers have no role in this process unless an appeal against a decision by the planning authority or the Environment Agency is made. Ministers adjudicate on those appeals.

Home Energy Efficiency/Warm Front Schemes

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many homes in the Manchester, Withington constituency have benefited from the home energy efficiency and warm front schemes. [201925]

Mr. Morley: Information is not available on a constituency basis on the number of homes that benefited from the original Home Energy Efficiency Scheme between 1991 and 1997.

It is estimated that between June 1997 and May 2000 approximately 2,200 households in Manchester, Withington received assistance from the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme.

Since the launch of the Warm Front scheme in June 2000 and the end of October 2004 approximately 2,000 households in Manchester, Withington received assistance.

Newspaper Article

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she approved the article by the Parliamentary Private Secretary, the hon. Member for the Wrekin (Peter Bradley), which appeared in the Sunday Telegraph on 21 November. [202100]

Alun Michael: Parliamentary Private Secretaries are not obliged to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for anything they write in a personal capacity.

PFI Projects

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for

has been taken to ensure that other Government Departments deliver sustainability within the private finance initiative projects; 200713]

(2) what role her Department *(a)* has and *(b)* plans to take to make the PFI process more accountable and transparent in terms of environmental sustainability;. [200712]

(3) what assessment her Department has made of the sustainability and environmental impacts of private finance initiative projects and the effectiveness of the PFI process to deliver environmentally sustainable projects; [200711]

(4) what role her Department has played in ensuring that private finance initiative projects create the minimum of environmental damage. [200710]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 25 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 149W.

Since then the sections of the "Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate" on waste, estates management and construction, and on procurement have been published; these sections commit all Government Departments to include clauses relating to sustainable development issues in relevant contracts, including PFIs and PPs.

The Government is committed to ensuring that sustainable development considerations are taken into account in public procurement (including PFIs/PPPs).

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [200868]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has in place, an Equal Opportunities Policy that clearly outlines our commitment not to discriminate on the grounds of age.

We have taken numerous steps to address potential age discrimination including flexibility for staff below the Senior Civil Service (SCS) grade to work on beyond normal retirement age, statistical monitoring of all of our selection processes, and training for all staff on diversity and equal opportunities.

DFID is a member of the Employers Forum on Age (EFA) and has adopted some of the good practice techniques recommended by the EFA. Using the EFA policy assessment toolkit, we have initiated a review of our current policies and practices in relation to discrimination.

AIDS

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research his

expectancy of someone who has been diagnosed with AIDS in *(a)* Sub-Saharan Africa, *(b)* other developing countries and *(c)* Western Europe; and if he will make a statement. [199554]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID, like many in the international system, uses data from a variety of sources, including UNAIDS, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations who are tasked with monitoring and reporting on the AIDS epidemic.

The latest UN Human Development Report estimates that life expectancy in many sub-Saharan African countries has fallen to under 33 years, primarily due to the AIDS epidemic. WHO report that overall life expectancy has dropped precipitously over the last 10 years—for females from 51.1 to 46.3 and males 47.3 to 44.8 years. WHO report that life expectancy in Africa has been cut by five to 10 years due to the AIDS epidemic, this is reduced even further by 15 to 20 years in Southern Africa. The Global Health Council report that in Thailand, Cambodia and Burma two to five years of life expectancy has been lost due to AIDS. UNAIDS report that life expectancy at birth in 2010 is projected to be 10 years less in Haiti and in Trinidad and Tobago nine years less than it would have been without AIDS.

Once someone is infected with the HIV virus their possible progression to AIDS or death will be affected by many factors. With access to treatment, not only ART but also basic health care people can live longer, potentially for more than 20 years. However for people with HIV with no access to clean water, or who are malnourished or who have little or no access to basic health services for treatment of opportunistic infections such as TB, life expectancy can drop substantially.

Angola

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the Government have offered to the Government of Angola in order to facilitate national elections by 2006. [201970]

Hilary Benn: DFID's Country Engagement Plan (CEP) for Angola, identifies the priorities for UK development assistance from 2003 to 2006. This includes support to the government and other stakeholders to prepare for the next general election which is expected to take place in September 2006.

Following discussions with the Angolan Government and civil society, DFID is looking at the possibility of funding a programme consisting of voter and civic education, election-related conflict management and election monitoring. Through the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, DFID has also been co-financing Angolan parliamentarians and civil society representatives to participate as observers in the elections of other Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states. This list includes: Malawi, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and currently Mozambique.

In addition, the European Union made a declaration in August, in which it stated that it stands ready to contribute to the establishment of a proper and

Climate Change

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact of climate change on the developing world. [201289]

Hilary Benn: DFID uses the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports and other multilateral assessments of climate change and potential impacts. However, it is clear that currently available information is inadequate. DFID has jointly commissioned, with DEFRA, a study on African climate research needs which is due to report this December. Climate change is a major theme of DFID's Research Strategy and we have commissioned a needs assessment to inform a call for new research proposals next spring.

DFID is also taking steps to help developing countries manage the risks of climate change and develop effective adaptation strategies. We have produced guidance for our country programmes and climate is included in our environmental screening procedures for all bilateral programmes.

DFID is working to integrate climate change risk management into the development and environmental safeguard policies of the main multilateral development institutions, starting with joint work on risk management with the World Bank in 2005.

Helping developing countries to meet their growth and energy needs through the adoption of more energy efficient technologies will also be crucial to tackling climate change. DFID is exploring ways to increase support for low carbon development with international development banks, including the World Bank.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [200858]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The only costs incurred as a result of criminal damage to the Department's buildings in the UK in the last two years is £345, in 2003–04.

Information on costs incurred by overseas offices is not readily available and cannot be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [200861]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The costs of building refurbishment, carried out by DFID in the UK in the last two years are in relation to the work on our office in East Kilbride. The costs are as follows:

	£
2002–03	5,223,000

Costs associated with refurbishment of any overseas offices are not centrally available and cannot be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the total external spend by his Department was on Private Finance Initiative consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200874]

Hilary Benn: DFID has no Private Finance Initiative arrangements.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the total external spend by his Department was on public private partnership consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200875]

Hilary Benn: DFID has no public private partnership arrangements.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202173]

Hilary Benn: Mobile phones were not managed under a central contract prior to 2003–04, and therefore information for earlier years (and information on mobile phones in overseas offices) is not readily available and could not be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost. Similarly, the costs incurred through the replacement of the individual phones stolen are not readily available and so also could not be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Over the last two years, the number of mobile phones in use in the UK, and their costs (including equipment, call charges and access charges) as follows:

	Number of mobile phones	*£*
2003–04	*230*	89,500
2004–05 (to date)	*434*	92,800

These figures include the two mobile phones for

The total number of mobile phones lost or stolen since 2001 is 28, broken down as follows:

	Number
2001	5
2002	6
2003	13
2004	6

No information is available on phones lost prior to this period.

Departmental Properties

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) his agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [200860]

Hilary Benn: There are no empty properties owned by DFID.

There are no other agencies or public bodies for which DFID is responsible.

Fair Trade

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate he has made of the percentage of British supermarket stock which is fairly traded; and what research his Department has carried out into fair trade products in the British market. [199547]

Hilary Benn: Over the past 10 years, the growth in sales of Fairtrade labelled goods in the UK has been rapid. There are now over 300 Fairtrade products which include coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, snacks and biscuits, sugar, honey, fruit juice and fresh fruit.

Sales of Fairtrade labelled products are expected to exceed £100 million for 2004 (out of an estimated £120 billion supermarket sales) and are increasing by 50 per cent. year on year. Fairtrade labelled products now account for 18 per cent. of the UK roast and ground coffee market, and over 3 per cent. of overall coffee sales. Fairtrade accounts for around 4 per cent. of the total UK banana market.

DFID has commissioned a number of research studies on Fair Trade, including a study on Understanding and Expanding Fair Trade, which focused on developing alternative coffee and cocoa markets for small sale farmers. In 2000, an overview and impact assessment study was commissioned to inform DFID's support to Fair Trade.

DFID supports the objectives of the Fairtrade Foundation and provides £300,000 to fund a number of activities, including annual Fairtrade Fortnight and public awareness raising campaigns.

Falluja

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what action the UK is taking to ensure emergency water and electricity supplies

(2) what assistance is being provided by the United Kingdom to restore essential utilities infrastructure to Falluja; [199841]

(3) what resources the UK plans to provide to assist in the re-building of Falluja; [199842]

(4) what emergency *(a)* medical supplies, *(b)* personnel and *(c)* equipment will be provided by the United Kingdom to assist those injured by coalition force attacks upon Falluja. [199843]

Hilary Benn: The Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) is leading on humanitarian and reconstruction work in Falluja and has established a central team to co-ordinate its assistance to the people of Falluja. This assistance includes: supplying food, water and medical supplies, restoring essential services, and refurbishing medical facilities. The UK is in close contact with the IIG, and DFID is providing advice to its Falluja co-ordination team.

The IIG and the Multi-National Force operating in Fallujah have reported that there is no humanitarian crisis so far and humanitarian visits to Falluja by British military officials confirm this assessment. Multi-National Forces have reported that their stockpiles of humanitarian supplies have provided for the immediate needs of Falluja's civilians. Iraqi Government and Iraqi Red Crescent trucks containing humanitarian supplies are now entering the city and the distribution of food, water, and medical supplies has begun. Injured civilians are being treated in mobile hospitals in Falluja, or have been taken for treatment at hospitals in nearby towns.

The Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) has also set aside significant funds from the Iraqi government budget for reconstruction work. The IIG is being supported by the Multi-National Force, which also has considerable resources for immediate post-conflict reconstruction work in Falluja, including clearing rubble and the restoration of water, sewerage and electricity services. United States agencies have planned around 100 reconstruction projects in the Falluja area totalling $84.1 million. These are due to begin soon and should complete by the end of January.

DFID is maintaining close contact with the IIG, with representatives of Multi-National Force-Iraq, and with humanitarian organisations on the ground, to address the needs of Falluja's population. DFID is ready to respond positively to requests for humanitarian help or further advice in Falluja or elsewhere.

Government Procurement (Developing Countries)

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had on including criteria on international labour standards in Government procurement procedures as a way of improving working conditions in developing countries. [201572]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is actively involved in discussions on the inclusion of social issues in public procurement processes. At the request of the inter-departmental Sustainable Procurement Group, the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) is preparing a guidance note on social issues in purchasing. DFID has provided detailed comments on the OGC's initial draft including comments on the inclusion of labour standards issues.

Iraq

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if he will make aid available for charities to assist children orphaned by the war in Iraq who are in foster homes. [200221]

Hilary Benn: UNICEF, along with five other NGOs, undertook a study of the needs of Iraqi children made vulnerable by war and its aftermath during the summer of 2003. This study informed decisions on UNICEF project priorities (see below). UNICEF is also continuing its pre-war efforts of assisting children in particular vulnerable situations, such as children living and working on the street, orphaned or disabled children, and children in conflict with the law.

DFID support to the children of Iraq is currently channelled through two main mechanisms. The first is a Civil Service Fund (CSF—£5 million over two years), which is focused on strengthening the capacity of Iraqi civil society organisations (CSO) to better address the needs of the poor and vulnerable groups, especially women and young people. The second is the multi-donor trust fund managed by the United Nations, part of which supports the activities carried out by UNICEF to help vulnerable groups. DFID has made an initial contribution of £30 million to the trust fund.

Further information on DFID's Iraq programme can be found at http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/iraq.asp

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what aid he has made available to offer psychological care to people affected by the war in Iraq. [200223]

Hilary Benn: DFID's support for the health sector in Iraq, including psychosocial support, is being channelled through the multi-donor trust fund managed by the United Nations. UN work in this area will focus on the provision of technical assistance for the development of mental health and psychosocial support services at the primary level. DFID has made an initial contribution of £30 million to the UN managed trust fund.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much money has been allocated by his Department for the provision of humanitarian aid to Iraq in each of the last two years. [200944]

Hilary Benn: Since the beginning of 2003, DFID has committed £333 million towards humanitarian and reconstruction work in Iraq. During 2003, over £132 million was allocated for humanitarian assistance, including contributions to United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and non-governmental organisations. So far, in 2004, DFID has allocated £201 million towards reconstruction and the restoration of essential services.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what projects his Department is supporting in Iraq. [201288]

Hilary Benn: Since March 2003, DFID has committed £333 million for humanitarian and reconstruction projects in Iraq, and disbursed approximately £251 million. This sum includes over £100 million disbursed through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and non-governmental organisations in response to humanitarian appeals in 2003.

Current projects in Iraq supported by DFID are listed as follows.

Reconstruction in southern Iraq:

£20 million to an Emergency Infrastructure Programme, which is improving the supply of water, power and fuel to over five million people in the south.

£20.5 million capacity building programme in the four southern Governorates, aimed at supporting strategic planning and financial management in both the public and private sectors.

£16.5 million programme to generate employment and address weaknesses in essential services in the four southern Governorates.

Technical assistance to help co-ordinate reconstruction in the south, and ensure completion of former Coalition Provisional Authority projects. (£5.5 million).

Re-establishing radio and television broadcasting capacity in the south, through training programmes and supply of equipment. (£7 million).

Support to government, justice, media and civil society:

Technical support and training (£4 million) within Iraq's system of public administration; focused on the centre of government (Prime Minister's Office, Council of Ministers' Secretariat, and Presidency) and in key ministries for reconstruction.

Support to the justice sector (£2 million): training programmes in international human rights law to Iraqi judges, lawyers and prosecutors.

£4.3 million macro-economic reform project to support the Iraqi Government in developing and implementing pro-poor economic reform programmes.

£5 million Political Participation Fund; supporting the development of legitimate and inclusive political institutions in Iraq, and to enable potentially marginalized groups to participate in the political process.

£5 million Civil Society Fund: strengthening the capacity of Iraqi civil society organisations to better address the needs of the most vulnerable groups.

£1 million media project: training journalists, editors and media managers on humanitarian and independent reporting.

Multilateral contributions:

£70 million contribution to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI), managed by the UN and the World Bank. Seventeen donors have committed around $1 billion to IRFFI. The UN and World Bank are implementing projects in a wide range of sectors including health, education, water and sanitation, electricity supply, support to refugees and internally displaced people, governance, and the electoral process.

Over £3 million to the IMF, to project support to the Interim Iraqi Government in economic governance and financial management.

Contribution of £8.5 million to the International Finance Corporation for a Small Business Fund Facility, designed to improve access to finance for small Iraqi businesses.

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what expenditure has been allocated to treat victims of burns caused by the war in Iraq. [200108]

Hilary Benn: DFID's support for the health sector in Iraq is being channelled through the multi-door trust fund managed by the United Nations. DFID has contributed £30 million to the fund so far focusing on a range of development sectors including health. DFID has no plans to provide bilaterial support for the treatment of burns.

Multinationals

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with multinational companies on *(a)* their responsibilities for the environment and *(b)* employment of local people in developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [200722]

Hilary Benn: I talk to multinational corporations about a range of issues, including environment and employment.

DFID works in partnership with governments, the private sector, international financial institutions, non-government organisations and trade unions to encourage good corporate and public sector governance. DFID aims to help improve the business and investment climate so as to maximise the positive impact in developing countries.

If for example, DFID works closely with, among other partners, oil, gas and mining multinationals on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. This is increasing the transparency of revenues paid to governments by extractive industry companies and the receipts recorded by host governments. Transparency is not, however, an end in itself but will increase the accountability of those governments to use these revenues for sustainable development and poverty reduction goals.

DFID promotes adherence to the "Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2000). The guidelines encourage multinationals to raise their environmental and social performance and call on them to:

(1) Commit to the continual improvement of environmental management performance, developing environmental management systems and ensuring better contingency planning to manage negative impacts.

(2) Ensure "to the greatest extent practicable" employment of local personnel and the provision of training to improve local skills and capacity in developing countries in which they operate.

The Guidelines do not replace local laws but promote standards of behaviour supplemental to local laws.

In addition, DFID continues to support specific labour and employment programmes within developing countries.

Through a Strategic Grant Agreement with the Trades Union Congress DFID is helping UK trade unions to support workers in developing countries. This may include ensuring preference being given to local people when multinationals operate in developing countries.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Artists Resale Right Directive

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what plans she has to implement the Artists' Resale Right Directive in the UK. [201575]

Ms Hewitt: The Government plans to introduce Artists' Release Right on 1 January 2006, which is the deadline in the Directive harmonising the right. The Government intends to issue a formal consultation document on the implementation of the Directive shortly, accompanied by a draft statutory instrument. The consultation documents will be mounted on the Patent Office's website.

ATM Machines

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research she has commissioned on the cost to the general public of the introduction of transaction charges at ATM machines. [200741]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The Government welcomes the recent increase in the number of ATMs as it has increased choice for consumers. Also, nearly all ATMs run by high street banks and building societies are now free. Only a few years ago this was not the case. The Government believes charging policy is a commercial matter for ATM operators.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the major clearing banks in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England and *(c)* the rest of the UK on the effects on users of the sale of ATM machines to companies which charge transaction fees for their use. [202545]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The Government have not held discussions with banks on the sale of ATMs to independent operators. The Government believe this is a commercial matter for individual banks.

Business Support

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many loans have been guaranteed through the Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme since 1995, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* sector; and what the value of grants was in each case in each year. [201112]

Nigel Griffiths: The Small Firms Loan Guarantee is not a grant scheme, but acts as guarantor.

I have placed in the Libraries of the House copies of tables that show the number of Small Firms Loan Guarantees issued since 1995 by region and sector.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial provision her Department has made for funding *(a)* grants for research and development and *(b)* collaborative research and development business support products. [201183]

Nigel Griffiths: I refer to the answer given on 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1299–1300W.

Business Support Initiatives

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have been assisted by *(a)* the UK High Technology Fund and *(b)* Regional Venture Capital Funds in each (i) region and (ii) constituency since 2000. [200533]

Nigel Griffiths: As at 31 October 2004 the Regional Venture Capital Funds (RVCFs) had assisted 140 businesses. This number can be broken down regionally as follows.

	Number
East Midlands	21
East of England	4
London	16
North East	23
North West	19
South East	26
South West	6
West Midlands	18
Yorkshire and Humber	7

A breakdown of constituencies that have one or more assisted businesses, for the most recent period available up until 31 December 2003, follows:

Analysis by constituency of businesses assisted by RVCFs in the period up to 31 December 2003:

East Midlands
- Blaby
- Bosworth
- Daventry
- Gedling
- Lincoln
- Loughborough
- 3x North West Leicestershire
- Northampton North
- Nottingham East
- Nottingham South
- South Derbyshire
- South East Cambridgeshire

South West
- Bath
- North Cornwall
- Somerton and Frome
- South West Devon

North West
- Altrincham and Sale West
- Bolton West
- Ellesmere Port and Neston
- 4x Manchester Central
- St. Helens South
- West Lancashire

London
- Battersea
- Bethnal Green and Bow
- 2x Enfield North

Feltham and Heston
Islington South and Finsbury
Kensington and Chelsea
2x Regents Park and Kensington North
Ruislip Northwood

West Midlands

Birmingham Ladywood
3x Coventry South
Newcastle under Lyme
2x Warwick and Leamington
West Worcestershire
Worcester

South East

Ashford
Basingstoke
2x Beaconsfield
Brighton Pavilion
Christchurch
Costwold
Faversham and Mid Kent
Guildford
Harrow East
Mid Sussex
Milton Keynes North East
Milton Keynes South West
Oxford East
South West Surrey
Southampton Itchen
Tonbridge and Malling
2x Tunbridge Wells
Wealden
Winchester

North East

Blyth Valley
Houghton and Washington
East Jarrow
2x Newcastle upon Tyne Central
Stockton North
6x Tyne Bridge
Tynemouth

Yorkshire and Humber

Calder Valley
2x City of York
Harrogate and Knaresborough
Hull East

Note:

1x assisted business per constituency listed unless otherwise stated.

As at 30 June 2004 the UK High Technology Fund had invested in nine private equity partnerships, which in turn have assisted a total of 173 businesses. The information necessary to determine both a regional and constituency breakdown of assisted businesses is not made available to us by the UK High Technology Fund.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public funding has been spent on Business Link in each *(a)* region and *(b)* constituency in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [200544]

Nigel Griffiths: The total amount of public funding broken down by region is shown in the following table. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by constituency.

Business link operators breakdown of all public funding by region

£000

Region	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
North East	29,727	42,588
North West	52,295	58,756
Yorkshire and the Humber	45,964	62,704
West Midlands	56,081	58,009
East Midlands	22,834	23,228
East of England	31,846	38,401
South West	33,392	39,155
South East	39,765	42,484
London	37,765	41,339

Endeavour Resources

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, if she will launch an investigation into Endeavour Resources's trading links with Darfur, Sudan. [200649]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* Sudan is subject to a full EU arms embargo. Under the Trade in Controlled Goods (Embargoed Destinations) Order 2004, implemented under the Export Control Act 2002 on 3 March 2004, it is a criminal offence for anyone in the UK or any UK person anywhere in the world, to seek to trade, without a valid licence, in military equipment to destinations under a full arms embargo imposed by the EU, OSCE or UK (additional extraterritorial controls on trade to destinations subject to UN embargo are in place under the UN Act 1946). The UK Government would only issue a licence for the supply of or trade in military equipment to Sudan in line with the exemptions to the embargo, for example for humanitarian end-use.

Investigations into breaches of UK export control legislation are the responsibility of HM Customs and Excise. Should anyone hold evidence of, or information to, any breach of UK export control legislation, this should be referred to HMCE. For legal reasons, we are unable to comment further on the nature and extent of enquiries relating to the case of Endeavour Resources.

Environmental Contamination

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the quantities of cadmium released to the environment from *(a)* phosphate fertilizer use, *(b)* iron and steel manufacture, *(c)* fossil fuel combustion and *(d)* nickel-cadmium batteries. [199683]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

(a) Estimated annual inputs of cadmium to the environment from phosphate fertilizer use have fallen from 7.1 tonnes in 1990, to 4.8 tonnes in 2003. It is likely that levels of contamination were higher 10 years earlier (i.e. 1980), but comparable data are not available for that period.

(b) and *(c)* Information on atmospheric emissions of a range of substances is provided by the UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (UKNAEI). Annual emissions of cadmium from iron and steel manufacture fell from less than five tonnes in 1970 to less than one tonne in 2002. Cadmium emissions from fuel combustion were 15.5 tonnes in 1970, falling to 3.5 tonnes in 2002.

(d) The recent targeted risk assessment commissioned by the Belgian Government under the existing substances regulation concluded that 75 per cent. of all refined cadmium (cadmium is a by product of zinc refining) goes into nickel cadmium batteries (NiCd). However, this accounts for only 1 per cent. of all cadmium released into the environment. NiCd batteries account for 0.0055 per cent. of municipal solid waste in the European Union.

ICSTIS

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received about the operation of the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) complaint line. [200989]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has received approximately 80 complaints about Premium Rate Services (PRS) in the past year which have mentioned the operation of the ICSTIS helpline. No complaints about ICSTIS were received in the previous two years. Ofcom's current review of PRS regulation will include an assessment of whether ICSTIS has the right tools and resources to regulate the PRS industry.

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will carry out an inquiry into the operation of the regulation of the premium rate telephone industry. [200990]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The Department has asked the communications regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), to review the role and powers of ICSTIS in premium rate regulation. Ofcom is due to report back shortly

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to her Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if she will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200613]

Ms Hewitt: During the period a April 2003 to 31 March 2004 the core Department paid supplier invoices, on average, within 27 days (unaudited figure). During this period, the core Department paid 89.6 per cent. of undisputed invoices within 30 days or the agreed credit terms. Data on invoices remaining unpaid after 90 days is available only at disproportionate cost.

The Government is committed to improving the payment culture in the UK in order to create a fair and stable environment for business transactions. Government departments and their agencies should aim to pay all invoices not in dispute within 39 days or within the agreed contractual terms if otherwise specified. The Department supports this policy.

Pay Bargaining Units

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, how many times the appraisal system for each pay bargaining unit in her Department has been changed in the last five years; and how many staff are fully or partly employed in connection with pay negotiations in each pay bargaining unit, broken down by grade. [200346]

Ms Hewitt: The table shows the staff time by grade spent in pay negotiations for DTI HQ, and aggregated totals for DTI agencies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs).

Bargaining units	*Time spent on negotiations annually, person days/grade*			
	SCS Grade 5	*Senior Managers*	*Middle Managers*	*Total*
DTI HQ	2.5	7.5	2.5	12.5
Agencies	9	36	26	81
NDPBs	9	76.5	28	113.5

The DTI Agencies are: Companies House, Employment Tribunal Service, Patent Office and Insolvency Service.

The NDPBs include: ACAS, the Equal Opportunities Commission, four regional development agencies and five research councils.

In the last five years, the appraisal arrangements DTI HQ have been changed once. In DTI Agencies and NDPBSs, listed above, the appraisal arrangements have been changed once on average, with two organisations changing them no more than three times and another two not changing them in that time.

Regional Development Agencies

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the change in her Department's contribution to the regional development agencies in 2005–06. [200558]

Jacqui Smith: The Department's contribution to the RDAs in 2005–06 was reviewed as part of Spending Review 2004. The Department's contribution to the RDA budget will increase by £229 million in 2005–06, from £234 million to £463 million. Of that, £169 million has been added to the RDA budget to allow the planned transfer of responsibilities for delivery of the Business Link services in their regions and Grant for Research and Development to the RDAs from April 2005.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what the total Government funding for each of the regional development agencies is for 2004, broken down by contributing Government departments. [201953]

Jacqui Smith: The total Government funding for each of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) for 2004 is £1.847 million.

Five Departments contribute to a single budget which is allocated to RDAs using a funding formula. The funding formula is agreed between DTI and other contributing Departments The breakdown by each contributing Department to the single budget is:

Contributing Government Departments	*(£million)*
DTI	234
ODPM	1,511
DEFRA	46
DFES	42
UKTI	13
DCMS	2
Totals[1]	1,847

[1] Total does not sum due to rounding

Regional Development Agency	*(£million)*
Advantage West Midlands	225
East of England Development Agency	88
East Midlands Development Agency	118
London Development Agency	315
North West Development Agency	329
One North East	213
South East of England Development Agency	107
South West of England Development Agency	103
Yorkshire Forward	253
Central Reserves	96
Totals	1,847

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the criteria are for measuring *(a)* jobs created and *(b)* jobs safeguarded in assessing regional development agencies' performance. [201960]

Jacqui Smith: The total number of employment opportunities directly attributable to Regional Development Agency (RDA) activity(taking new and safeguarded jobs together(is one of the core output targets that England's RDAs are required to deliver in 2004–05.

As outlined in a Technical Note, the unit of account is a permanent full-time equivalent paid job (FTE). A job is created and is counted, when a post is filled. To be treated as permanent, the job should have a life expectancy of at least one year at the time of the forecast and at the time it is counted. Part-time jobs can be converted to FTE jobs on a pro rata basis with a job over 30 hours treated as full-time or, if the information is not available, two part-time jobs can equal a full-time job.

A job can only be forecast to be safeguarded if it exists at the time of the decision to commit to the project and is forecast by the RDA to be lost to the region within (normally) one year if the project does not go ahead. A job can be counted as safeguarded if it was forecast as at risk at the appraisal stage, is still in existence at the time of counting, and is no longer at risk of being lost within (normally) a year.

To arrive at the reported total, adjustments for multiple funding and additionality are made the RDAs. In addition, Foreign Direct Investment and Regional Selective Assistance/Selective Finance for Investment in England jobs are included in the reported figure only after the jobs have been delivered and can be counted in the relevant period.

Research and Development

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contribution will have to be made by the private sector and charitable funding in order to achieve the public and private spending on research and development targets set out in the Spending Review 2004; and what contribution has been secured from *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* charitable funding. [200540]

Ms Hewitt: The Science and Innovation Investment Framework: 2004–2014 outlines the Government's ambition to increase the overall levels of R and D in the economy to 2.5 per cent. of GDP by 2014. This is a challenging target, and public and private expenditure on R and D will have to rise faster than the trend rate of GDP growth over the period if it is to be achieved. The Government has made extra resources available in SR 2004 in line with this objective, including an extra £1 billion for the UK science base by 2007–08, equivalent to a real-term increase of 5.8 per cent. This public investment will have to be matched by a similar commitment from business.

The Government is committed to working in partnership with business to raise the UK's investment levels in R and D, and has put in place a number of measures to encourage greater private sector investment in R and D, including the R and D tax credits and funding for collaborative research and knowledge transfer via the DTI's Technology Strategy.

Charity funding for R and D has grown steadily in recent years, and the Government is working in partnership with charities to improve the financial sustainability of university research. In SR 2004, the Government announced additional funding of up to £90 million by 2007–08 to help close the gap between the costs of charity-sponsored research and the funds currently available from universities and charities.

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are being taken *(a)* to prevent the best young scientists from leaving (i) research and (ii) the UK and *(b)* to attract young scientific talent from abroad. [199952]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The evidence base for a brain gain/drain is uncertain, with some recent studies showing the UK as a net beneficiary of science, engineering and technology (SET) skills. Therefore, the Office of Science and Technology is taking forward a study to provide a clear and usable definition of the brain drain to ascertain whether the UK SET base is currently experiencing a net brain drain of SET personnel qualified to at least PhD level and to

provide an analysis as to what the future balance of inward versus outward migration of SET personnel might be.

A number of schemes have been implemented in the UK which aim to attract scientific talent from abroad. For example, the Research Councils operate the Dorothy Hodgkin Postgraduate Awards scheme that provides PhD scholarship for students from India, China, Hong Kong and the developing world.

The Roberts Review (SET for Success, 2002) included recommendations that focused on the supply of scientists and improving the attractiveness of research careers. In its strategy for science, "Investing in Innovation", the Government made a commitment to implement measures based on these recommendations. These included increasing Research Council postdoctoral researchers' salaries by around £4,000 by 2005, increasing the average Research Council PhD stipend to £13,000 by 2005, providing young researchers with two weeks a year of transferable skills training, and establishing a new academic fellowship scheme that will provide more stable and attractive routes into academia. The 2004 Spending Review settlement will provide additional funding to extend the average duration of Research Council PhD awards to three-and-a-half years, and further increase the level of Research Council PhD stipends by at least inflation.

The work of the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (science, engineering and technology) includes sharing good employment practices, and supporting women returners. A contribution from the Department for Education and Skills will enable the Resource Centre to develop a scheme dedicated to encouraging more female SET undergraduates to take up SET professions.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adrenaline

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance is given to *(a)* schools, *(b)* other educational facilities and *(c)* local authority-run centres regarding the administration of adrenaline to children who suffer from severe allergies. [199756]

Margaret Hodge: The DfES and Department of Health have jointly produced guidance on "Supporting pupils with medical needs" in schools. This provides information on management and control of anaphylaxis and advises that training in the administration of adrenaline is given by a health professional. Specific guidance on the administration of adrenaline has not been issued to other educational facilities and local authority-run centres. However, all providers have health and safety responsibilities towards pupils and where staff administer adrenaline they must ensure that the staff are properly trained.

Child Care (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many new full day care places have been created in the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the past three years. [199674]

Margaret Hodge: 918 new full day care places have been created in Wandsworth since 2001. Taking account of turnover, 779 net new places have been created. This has resulted in an increase in the stock of places from 2,741 in March 2001 to 3,520 in March 2004. There are a variety of reasons why provision may close, ranging from childminders taking up other careers once their own children reach school age or changes in family circumstances resulting in career changes, to work-friendly full day care replacing other forms of provision.

Table 1 details the number of gross and net full day care places created in Wandsworth for each year since 2001. Table 2 shows the number of nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds.

Table 1

	Gross childcare places	*Net childcare places*
2001–02	62	28
2002–03	304	304
2003–04	615	447
Total	918	779

Table 2

	Nursery education places taken up
2002	6,600
2003	6,300
2004	6,200

The number of nursery education places taken up in Wandsworth over the past three years has declined as the population of 3 and 4-year-olds has reduced.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps his Department is taking to monitor local authority spending on the promotion of nursery education in the London borough of Wandsworth. [199675]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Departmental Initiatives (Young People)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will list each programme and initiative launched by his Department to help young people since 1997; and which of those programmes and initiatives remain in operation; [200260]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effects of Government policies relating to young people; [200262]

(3) if he will make a statement on his Department's efforts since 1997 in helping young people. [200264]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Department for Education and Skills has launched the following programmes since 1997 to help young people through offers of advice, support and positive activities, all of which remain in operation: Connexions; Get REAL; Millennium Volunteers; Positive Activities for Young People; the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy; and Transforming Youth Work.

An important aspect of the Government's strategy is to involve local people in running activities for young people in their area. The Local Network Fund is

managed locally by voluntary organisations and provides funding and capacity building support to community groups working with vulnerable young people. The Neighbourhood Support Fund supports local voluntary and community sector projects in delivering informal learning and self development for hard to reach young people.

The Government made an assessment of services for children, young people and families in the Green Paper "Every Child Matters" published in September 2003. It concluded that, while much progress has been made, there was scope for services to work together more effectively to help every child and young person achieve better outcomes. This view was supported in consultation.

The Government have now legislated through the Children Act 2004 to make changes that will lead to local services working together through children's trust arrangements to improve outcomes for all children and young people. These reforms will span the front line staff providing integrated services, through the processes that support them, to the plans that set their direction and the governance arrangements that sustain them. The Act is the legislative spine for a wider programme of change: we will shortly publish "Every Child Matters: Change for Children" setting out the national framework for local change programmes that will turn the Act into reality.

The Government remain fully committed to helping all children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes and especially to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution to society, and to achieve economic well-being. That is why we have enshrined these outcomes in the Children Act 2004. A more detailed assessment of programmes and initiatives for young people is being undertaken in the course of developing the Youth Green Paper, which is due to be published in the new year.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199627]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The DfES websites do comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

All sites comply with level 1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines while some sites also comply with levels 2 and 3 of the guidelines.

Specific examples of sites that comply up to level 2 of the guidelines include:

http://www.need2know.co.uk

The young person's portal

http://www.parentcentre.gov.uk

The Parent Centre is for all parents and carers who want to help their child or children to learn.

http://www.connexions-direct.com

Are you 13–19? If so, Connexions Direct can offer you all the information and advice you need to make the decisions and choices in your life. Connexions Direct is part of Connexions. It offers you information on a wide range of topics as well as confidential advice and practical help.

The www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4U website is currently being developed to meet levels 2 and 3. It will go live in March 2005. Jobs4U is a searchable database which allows young people to find information on possible career paths and the qualifications and skills required to achieve these.

The DfES is currently reviewing our major sites with a view to bringing them all up to level 2 and 3 of the w3c standards.

The DfES is also responsible for delivering three sections on Directgov (www.direct.gov.uk) that meet the WAI "A" standard for accessibility and are Working towards "AA" standard for 2005.

Education (Lewisham)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes have been made in the provision of services for children aged under five years in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency since 1997. [201103]

Margaret Hodge: Since 1997 we have created five Sure Start local programmes in Lewisham providing services for 3,676 children. Of these, three are based within Deptford: Honor Oak; Grinling Gibbons and Evelyn—providing services for 2,253 children. We have established 17 neighbourhood nurseries in Lewisham, delivering 586 nursery places. Of these, five are in Deptford, delivering 171 nursery places. There are six children's centres planned for Lewisham and each of Deptford's Sure Start local programmes will develop into a children's centre.

From April 1999—March 2004 Lewisham created 3,732 childcare places. This shows an increase in the stock of childcare places, taking into account turnover of 2,929 places.

In 1997 4,300 free nursery education places were taken up by three and four year old children. In 2004 5,700 children aged three and four years had taken up free nursery education places.

Education Bodies

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to ensure consistency between advice given to schools by *(a)* the Specialist Schools Trust, *(b)* the National College for School Leadership, *(c)* the Teacher Training Agency and other advice from his Department. [201137]

Mr. Miliband: In April 2003 the Government established an Implementation Review Unit. The unit is an independent panel of headteachers and senior school managers whose remit is to cut unnecessary burdens on schools. Its responsibilities include advising the Department and national education agencies about the consistency and timeliness of advice and guidance to schools.

Education Finance

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he is taking to eliminate the funding gap between schools and further education colleges in Cambridge. [201271]

Mr. Miliband: The Government have already taken action to narrow the funding gap between school sixth forms and further education colleges. For the academic year 2003/04, base funding rates per qualification increased by 3 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 4.5 per cent. for further education colleges on a broadly comparable basis. In 2004/05, funding rates for colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent., while those for school sixth forms rose by 4 per cent. We expect to see this trend continue in the 2005/06 academic year.

Educational Psychologists

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of future *(a)* demand for and *(b)* supply of educational psychologists in local education authorities; and if he will make a statement. [199775]

Margaret Hodge: Decisions on the recruitment, retention and deployment of educational psychologists (EPs) are matters for local authorities as employers to determine in light of local circumstances and available resources.

We are considering the future role and training needs of EPs within the context of wider discussions on children's workforce issues.

Exeter University

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance he will give to Exeter university chemistry students regarding the completion of their degrees in the event of the closure of their Department part-way through their degree course; and what assistance his Department will provide to these students. [199946]

Dr. Howells: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. It is for Exeter university to decide on how to support students affected by the closure. However, I understand that the university is working closely with the students to ensure that all their individual needs are met. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will monitor the situation closely.

Expenditure

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure per pupil was in the Bassetlaw constituency over each of the last 10 years for *(a)* nursery education, *(b)* primary schools, *(c)* secondary schools and *(d)* further education. [201093]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested for nursery education, primary schools and secondary schools is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an LEA. Bassetlaw forms part of Nottinghamshire LEA. The information requested can be found in the following table:

£

	School based expenditure[4,5] per pupil[6]				
	Pre-Primary Education[8,10]	*Primary Education[9]*	*Pre-Primary and Primary Education[9]*	*Secondary Education*	*Combined LEA and school based expenditure[7] per pupil[5]*
Pre LGR Nottinghamshire[2,3]					
1993–94	n/a	n/a	1,630	2,370	2,700
1994–95	n/a	n/a	1,700	2,400	2,670
1995–96	n/a	n/a	1,690	2,360	2,590
1996–97	n/a	n/a	1,720	2,360	2,580
1997–98[11]	n/a	n/a	1,720	2,360	2,570
Nottinghamshire[2,3]					
1998–99	n/a	n/a	1,810	2,390	2,650
1999–2000[12]	12,360	2,010	2,030	2,540	2,620
2000–01	10,660	2,220	2,240	2,710	2,800
2001–02	16,270	2,410	2,430	2,970	3,040
2002–03[5,10]	n/a	2,500	n/a	3,030	3,120

[1] 1999–2000 saw a change in data source when the data collection moved from the RO1 form collected by the ODPM to the Section 52 form from the DfES. 2002–03 saw a further break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) and the associated restructuring of the outturn tables. The change in sources is shown by the dotted line.

[2] Financial data is collected at local authority level and not constituency level and as such figures provided are for Nottinghamshire LEA.

[3] Local government reorganisation (LGR) took place in Nottinghamshire during 1998 where pre-LGR Nottinghamshire was split into Nottinghamshire LEA and City of Nottingham LEA from 1998–99 onwards.

[4] School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by the schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school-based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates. This excludes the central cost of support services such as home to school transport, local authority administration and the financing of capital expenditure.

[5] The 2002–03 calculation is broadly similar to the calculation in previous years. However, 2001–02 and earlier years includes all premature retirement compensation (PRC) and Crombie payments, mandatory PRC payments and other indirect employee expenses, while in 2002–03 only the schools element of these categories is included. In 2001–02 this accounted for approximately 70 per pupil of the England total, while the schools element of these categories accounted for approximately 50 per pupil of the England total in 2002–03. Also, for some LEAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors was reported within the LEA part of the form in 2002–03 and would therefore be excluded from school based expenditure, though this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

[6] To calculate school based expenditure per pupil, the pupil numbers include only those pupils attending maintained establishments within each sector and are drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[7] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA).
[8] To calculate combined LEA and school based expenditure per pupil, the pupil figures include all pre-primary pupils, including those under 5s funded by the LEA and being educated in private settings, pupils educated in maintained mainstream schools and other LEA maintained pupils. The pupil data for pupils attending maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools are taken from the DfES Annual Schools Census. Private voluntary and independent (PVI) under 5 pupil numbers are taken from the Early Years census but are only included for 1999–2000 onwards. For 1995–96 onwards other LEA maintained pupils are included in the pupil count. This includes all pupils attending schools not maintained by the Authority for whom the Authority is paying full tuition fees, or educated otherwise than in schools and pupil referral units under arrangements made by the Authority drawn from the Form 8b submitted to the DfES. Also included as other LEA maintained pupils are all pupils attending pupil referral units who are not registered at a maintained mainstream school drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census.
[9] Expenditure was not distinguished between the pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of Section 52 for financial year 1999–2000.
[10] School based expenditure in nursery schools was not recorded in 2002–03.
[11] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99.
[12] The 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.
[13] Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.
[14] n/a = not available

(d) The Department does not collect information on the level of funding per pupil in further education at the local or regional level. However, the following table shows funding per full-time equivalent student in further education in England from 1994–95 to 2003–04:

	FE total funding per pupil
1994–95	3,080
1995–96	3,040
1996–97	3,050
1997–98	3,070
1998–99	3,090
1999–2000	3,380
2000–01	3,640
2001–02	4,050
2002–03 [1]	4,120
2003–04 [2]	4,240

[1] Provisional Data
[2] Planned Expenditure

Notes:
1. These are cash figures that show total funding for the further education (FE) sector.
2. The figures include moneys provided for participation and certain funding for earmarked purposes, including capital, the Standards Fund and other special grants to colleges.
3. The figures are consistent with those published in the DfES "Departmental Annual Report 2004".

Increased Flexibility Programme

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the 14–16 Increased Flexibility Programme will be continued. [201265]

Mr. Miliband: An announcement will be made shortly.

Physical Education Teachers

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many qualified physical education teachers were teaching in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in 2004; and what the figures were for 1997. [202720]

Mr. Miliband: Primary school teachers are trained to deliver all subjects in the national curriculum including PE.

Information on the numbers of teachers of PE in secondary schools and their qualifications was collected in November 1996 and 2002.

The following table gives the number of full-time teachers in maintained secondary schools who taught some PE, year groups seven to 13, and the highest post A level qualification held in the subject for those years.

Physical education

	2002	*1996*
Degree (percentage)	25	11
BEd (percentage)	31	34
PGCE (percentage)	6	5
Certificate of education (percentage)	13	23
Other qualification (percentage)	2	[1] —
No qualification (percentage)	22	26
Total teachers (thousand)	21	20

[1] Equals zero or less than 0.5 per cent.

Notes:
1. The sum of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
2. Teachers may also teach subjects other than PE.
3. The degree category includes higher degrees but exclude BEds.
4. Where a teacher has more than one post A level qualification in PE, the qualification level is determined by the highest level reading from left (Degree) to right (Other Qualification). For example, teachers shown under PGCE have a PGCE but not a degree or BEd in PE, while those with a PGCE and a degree are shown only under Degree.

Source:
Secondary Schools Curriculum and Staffing Survey.

The following table shows the proportion of subject periods taught in PE in maintained secondary schools, year groups 7 to 13, by teachers holding a post A level qualification. It shows that in 2002 and 1996 94 per cent. of PE periods were taught by a teacher with a post A level qualification in PE.

Physical education

Percentage	*2002*	*1996*
Degree	35	15
BEd	37	47
PGCE	5	5
Certificate of education	15	27
Other qualification	2	[1] —
No qualification	6	6

[1] Equals zero or less than 0.5 per cent.

Notes:
1. The sum of the percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
2. Teachers may also teach subjects other than PE.
3. The degree category includes higher degrees but exclude BEds.

4. Where a teacher has more than one post A level qualification in PE, the qualification level is determined by the highest level reading from left (Degree) to right (Other Qualification). For example, teachers shown under PGCE have a PGCE but not a degree or BEd in PE, while those with a PGCE and a degree are shown only under Degree.

Source:
Secondary Schools Curriculum and Staffing Survey.

Primary School Teachers

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many primary school teachers there are in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each local education authority, broken down by (i) race and (ii) gender. [201678]

Mr. Miliband: Information on the ethnic origin of teachers in the maintained sector is collected annually, but cannot be split by gender or phase of education. A breakdown of the information available for January 2004 at national, regional and LEA level was published in SFR 34/2004, Table 18. A copy of this has been placed in the House of Commons Library. It is also available at the following URL: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000493/index.shtml

The following table gives the headcount number of qualified full-time and part-time primary teachers employed in maintained nursery and primary schools by gender for England, by region and LEA at March 2003, (the latest information available by gender).

Numbers of qualified regular teachers in service in maintained nursery and primary schools, March 2003

	Full-time		*Part-time*		*Total*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Darlington	60	300	[—]	60	60	360
Hartlepool	50	330	[—]	20	50	350
Middlesbrough	90	510	[—]	50	90	570
Redcar and Cleveland	80	500	[—]	60	80	560
Stockton on Tees	110	630	[—]	60	110	690
Durham	300	1,630	[—]	240	310	1,860
Northumberland	60	700	[—]	170	60	860
Gateshead	120	640	[—]	60	120	700
Newcastle upon Tyne	90	740	[—]	90	90	830
North Tyneside	100	570	[—]	140	100	710
South Tyneside	90	500	[—]	40	90	530
Sunderland	170	990	[—]	70	170	1,060
North East	1,330	8,030	20	1,060	1,350	9,090
Blackburn with Darwen	90	570	[—]	110	100	670
Blackpool	100	410	[—]	60	100	480
Halton	70	420	[—]	60	70	480
Warrington	120	630	[—]	120	120	750
Cheshire	390	2,060	10	350	390	2,410
Cumbria	300	1,390	20	400	320	1,780
Bolton	180	890	10	130	180	1,010
Bury	120	520	[—]	110	130	630
Manchester	270	1,480	10	180	270	1,660
Oldham	140	770	10	130	150	900
Rochdale	120	730	10	100	130	820
Salford	120	770	[—]	90	120	860
Stockport	120	900	[—]	210	120	1,110
Tameside	130	750	[—]	100	130	860
Trafford	110	660	[—]	100	110	760
Wigan	140	910	[—]	130	150	1,040
Lancashire	660	3,300	30	900	690	4,190
Knowsley	120	580	[—]	80	120	660
Liverpool	280	1,540	[—]	170	280	1,710
St Helens	130	550	[—]	70	130	620
Sefton	170	890	10	160	180	1,050
Wirral	180	1,000	10	210	190	1,220
North West	4,040	21,710	130	3,960	4,170	25,670
East Riding of Yorkshire	180	840	10	230	190	1,070
City of Kingston Upon Hull	170	770	10	130	180	910
North East Lincolnshire	110	500	10	100	120	590
North Lincolnshire	80	500	10	90	90	590
York	100	440	10	120	110	560
North Yorkshire	310	1,620	10	290	310	1,920
Barnsley	140	670	[—]	60	140	730
Doncaster	190	950	10	140	200	1,080
Rotherham	160	850	[—]	140	170	990
Sheffield	300	1,420	20	460	320	1,870
Bradford	300	1,790	20	380	320	2,170
Calderdale	130	640	[—]	140	130	790
Kirklees	220	1,240	10	310	230	1,540
Leeds	420	2,120	10	450	430	2,570
Wakefield	200	980	[—]	120	210	1,100
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,010	15,320	120	3,160	3,130	18,490

Numbers of qualified regular teachers in service in maintained nursery and primary schools, March 2003

	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Derby	130	740	10	190	140	940
Leicester	2	2	2	2	2	2
Nottingham	210	850	10	270	220	1,110
Rutland	2	2	2	2	2	2
Derbyshire	410	2,090	10	610	420	2,700
Leicestershire	350	1,590	20	510	370	2,100
Lincolnshire	2	2	2	2	2	2
Northamptonshire	310	1,830	10	240	320	2,070
Nottinghamshire	2	2	2	2	2	2
East Midlands	2,480	11,750	80	2,710	2,570	14,460
Herefordshire	110	440	1	180	110	620
Stoke on Trent	150	720	1	90	160	810
Telford and Wrekin	80	510	10	60	80	570
Shropshire	170	710	10	200	170	910
Staffordshire	440	2,230	10	400	450	2,630
Warwickshire	240	1,390	10	220	250	1,610
Birmingham	740	3,660	10	440	750	4,110
Coventry	160	970	10	200	170	1,170
Dudley	180	950	10	170	190	1,120
Sandwell	220	950	1	120	220	1,070
Solihull	150	690	1	180	150	870
Walsall	160	830	10	140	170	970
Wolverhampton	140	770	10	140	150	910
Worcestershire	220	1,370	1	330	220	1,700
West Midlands	3,150	16,170	90	2,880	3,240	19,050
Luton	110	630	10	160	120	790
Peterborough	100	540	1	120	100	660
Southend on Sea	80	470	10	110	100	590
Thurrock	60	450	10	130	80	570
Bedfordshire	2	2	2	2	2	2
Cambridgeshire	220	1,500	10	330	230	1,830
Essex	600	3,530	30	780	630	4,300
Hertfordshire	380	3,080	20	980	390	4,060
Norfolk	560	2,190	40	670	600	2,850
Suffolk	290	1,600	20	690	310	2,290
East of England	2,450	14,840	150	4,110	2,610	18,940
Camden	60	360	10	100	70	460
City of London	1	10	1	0	1	10
Hackney	2	2	2	2	2	2
Hammersmith and Fulham	40	310	1	60	40	370
Haringey	120	660	10	180	120	840
Islington	90	410	10	80	100	490
Kensington and Chelsea	20	200	10	40	20	240
Lambeth	130	680	10	150	140	830
Lewisham	120	710	20	260	140	970
Newham	190	890	1	90	190	980
Southwark	140	670	10	110	150	780
Tower Hamlets	160	610	20	140	180	750
Wandsworth	80	590	10	170	90	770
City of Westminster	2	2	2	2	2	2
Barking and Dagenham	110	520	1	60	110	580
Barnet	120	840	10	340	130	1,180
Bexley	100	660	10	170	110	830
Brent	90	580	1	100	90	680
Bromley	2	2	2	2	2	2
Croydon	140	970	1	220	150	1,190
Ealing	150	780	10	150	150	930
Enfield	160	850	10	260	170	1,110
Greenwich	100	620	20	180	120	790
Harrow	80	580	1	180	80	760
Havering	120	610	10	170	120	780
Hillingdon	100	690	10	150	100	840
Hounslow	80	580	10	130	90	710
Kingston upon Thames	2	2	2	2	2	2
Merton	2	2	2	2	2	2
Redbridge	130	740	10	170	140	920
Richmond upon Thames	80	400	10	180	80	580
Sutton	2	2	2	2	2	2

Numbers of qualified regular teachers in service in maintained nursery and primary schools, March 2003

	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Waltham Forest	110	570	10	120	110	700
London	3,260	18,810	250	4,570	3,510	23,380
Bracknell Forest	40	270	[1]	90	50	370
Brighton and Hove	130	590	20	160	150	760
Isle of Wight	30	280	[1]	80	40	360
Medway	120	720	[1]	130	120	850
Milton Keynes	130	770	[1]	170	130	940
Portsmouth	90	530	[1]	120	90	650
Reading	30	380	[1]	70	30	450
Slough	50	390	[1]	80	60	470
Southampton	110	540	10	160	120	700
West Berkshire	60	420	[1]	190	60	610
Windsor and Maidenhead	30	290	[1]	130	30	420
Wokingham	50	420	[1]	130	50	550
Buckinghamshire	210	1,270	10	540	220	1,810
East Sussex	260	1,150	20	410	290	1,560
Hampshire	560	3,430	20	980	580	4,410
Kent	630	3,390	30	920	660	4,310
Oxfordshire	230	1,550	10	320	240	1,870
Surrey	370	3,150	10	830	380	3,980
West Sussex	390	2,030	20	660	410	2,690
South East	3,510	21,580	170	6,180	3,690	27,750
Bath and North East Somerset	90	350	[1]	70	90	420
Bournemouth	250	1,050	10	250	250	1,300
City of Bristol	90	480	[1]	120	90	600
North Somerset	190	660	[1]	70	190	730
Plymouth	80	390	[1]	50	80	440
Poole	160	750	10	270	170	1,020
South Gloucestershire	100	530	[1]	130	100	660
Swindon	90	310	[1]	100	90	410
Torbay	350	1,270	10	230	360	1,490
Cornwall	10	10	[1]	10	10	20
Isles of Scilly	490	1,760	40	550	530	2,310
Devon	160	880	10	180	170	1,060
Dorset	290	1,480	30	610	330	2,090
Somerset	290	1,210	20	230	300	1,440
Wiltshire	210	1,220	20	470	230	1,690
South West	2,930	12,790	170	3,500	3,100	16,290
England	26,180	140,990	1,190	32,120	27,360	173,110

[1] Nil or less than 5.
[2] Not available.

The information is taken from the Database of Teachers' Records a database maintained primarily for pensions purposes. 10 to 20 per cent. of part-time teachers may not be included. LEAs are shown as not available where data are insufficiently complete to be reliable. National and regional totals show data for all LEAs.

Primary Schools (Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, how many primary schools in Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland are planned to be closed due to falling rolls. [201502]

Mr. Miliband: Middlesbrough local education authority is responsible for planning school places in the area. It has to ensure that schools serve the needs of their local communities and provide good quality education in a cost effective way.

I understand that Middlesbrough LEA is consulting on a number of options for reorganising schools to deal with falling pupil numbers and hopes to publish statutory proposals early in 2005. Any proposals to close Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland schools will be decided locally by the school organisation committee, or by an independent schools adjudicator if the committee cannot reach an unanimous decision.

School Meals

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions he has had on the nutritional standards for food provided at breakfast clubs. [201534]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* We are taking forward a number of projects to improve school food and provide consistent messages about healthy eating across the curriculum. We plan to extend our standards for school lunches to cover food consumed in schools throughout the day, which will include food provided at breakfast clubs.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what steps he is taking to encourage the formation of school nutritional action groups. [201535]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding reply 2 December 2004]*: The Healthy Living Blueprint was launched on 6 September 2004. It contains guidelines for schools to develop and implement a whole-school food policy, and school nutrition action groups have helped many schools improve the standard of food provided and consumed throughout the school day. Further information can be found on the website: http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthylivina/wholeschoQlapproach/rmks/

The headteacher and governing body of a school decide whether or not to form and support a school nutritional action group.

Students

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial assistance is available in other EU countries to British students studying there. [201126]

Dr. Howells: Higher education students from England and Wales do not qualify for financial assistance under the Department's student support arrangements if they are undertaking their entire course at an overseas institution. However, students who are attending a course offered by a UK institution in conjunction with an overseas institution, and who are required to spend a period of study at that overseas institution as part of their UK course, are eligible for financial assistance for the period spent overseas.

UK students who spend a period overseas under the Erasmus exchange scheme normally receive an Erasmus grant, provided by the European Commission, which contributes towards the extra costs arising from studying abroad.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many non-British students are studying in British universities; [201127]

(2) how many EU students are studying in British universities. [201128]

Dr. Howells: The available information has been taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record. In 2002/03, there were 250,195 non-UK domiciled students enrolled on higher education courses at HE institutions in Great Britain and of these, 87,090 were from the EU and 6,390 were from the EU accession countries.

Sure Start

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what consultation exercise has been undertaken to review Sure Start's independent funding. [201040]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: Sure Start local programmes were originally intended to be time limited. However, we are now intending, in discussion with local programme managers and local authorities to continue funding Sure Start children's centres as part of ongoing mainstream funding for children's services. We will tell the Sure Start children's centres what their continued funding will be as soon as final discussions are taken.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the funding for Sure Start will be ring-fenced when the programme is administered by local authorities. [201071]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: We will be discussing with local authorities and Sure Start programmes how to ensure that key services and ways of working successfully delivered by the programmes are maintained as local authorities take on increasing responsibility for planning of children's services including Sure Start local programmes. We expect to begin this process in April 2006, and hope that all programmes will be administered through local authorities by April 2008. We will ensure that ring-fencing remains until we have agreed ways of ensuring that funding mechanisms support the transition from Sure Start local programmes to Sure Start children's centres without jeopardising the quality of services for local families.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many full-time equivalent posts were being funded by Sure Start programmes on the latest date for which figures are available; and what proportion of these posts are occupied by men. [201526]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 2 December 2004]*: The information is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tuition Fees (Art Degrees)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether prospective students who are required to undertake a one-year foundation course prior to commencing an art degree in 2006 will be liable to pay top-up tuition fees for their art degree; and if he will make a statement. [202017]

Dr. Howells: Students taking art or other foundation courses in 2005/06 (prior to starting their higher education course in 2006/07) will come within the variable deferred fees regime. Such students will be able to take advantage of the new system under which tuition fees do not have to be paid until after graduation (and only then while the individual is earning above a certain level, currently set at £15,000), and of the enhanced student support package in 2006/07, including the new means-tested £2,700 grant.

Universities (Ethnic Minorities)

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many black and minority ethnic young men went to university in 2002. [200467]

Dr. Howells: The available information has been taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record and is given as follows.

UK domiciled, young[1], male entrants[2] to undergraduate HE courses at UK HE institutions, 2002/03

Ethnicity	*Male entrants*
White	101,850
Black or black British—Caribbean	895
Black or black British—African	1,755
Other black background	290
Asian or Asian British—Indian	6,720
Asian or Asian British—Pakistani	3,930

UK domiciled, young[1], male entrants[2] to undergraduate HE courses at UK HE institutions, 2002/03

Ethnicity	*Male entrants*
Asian or Asian British—Bangladeshi	1,180
Chinese/other ethnic background—Chinese	1,595
Other Asian background	1,505
Mixed—white and black Caribbean	370
Mixed—white and black African	235
Mixed—white and Asian	1,000
Other mixed background	645
Other ethnic background	830
Total known ethnicity	122,800
Not known	2,940
Information refused	2,615
Total	128,355

[1] Aged under 21 years.

[2] Figures only cover first year students on undergraduate courses. There will be further students enrolled on subsequent years of their course.

Note:
Figures are a snapshot as at 1 December and are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record

Video Conferencing Units

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [201590]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 2 December 2004]*: Every DfES building has a number of videoconferencing units installed within it as follows:

	Number of video units installed
Darlington	7
London	[1]19
Runcorn	5
Sheffield	11

[1] 13 Sanctuary Buildings/6 Caxton House

As the Department no longer has agencies, no figures have been included in respect of that part of the question.

At the present time, there are no formal plans to increase the number of videoconferencing units in the Department but we constantly monitor the amount of use made of the studios to inform decisions about the potential need for extra facilities.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202174]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1739–40W, to the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Prisk). The replacement cost of the one lost mobile phone was £144.

Timber

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans his Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [201143]

Mrs. McGuire: The funding of the Central Point of Expertise for Timber Procurement is a matter for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Scotland Office is not involved in the funding arrangements.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

IT Contracts

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesborough, representing the Church Commissioners, what the *(a)* projected cost at the time of tender and *(b)* actual cost at the time of completion was for each IT contract commissioned by the Commission over the last five years. [201615]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Church Commissioners do not generally tender for IT services; these are provided under a common service agreement by the Archbishops' Council.

The exception is a project to register the Commissioners' rural property interests in compliance with the Land Registration Act 2002, whose IT element is projected to cost £163,000 plus VAT. This will not be completed until December 2007 but we expect actual cost to match this projection.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Voter Participation

29. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what action the Electoral Commission has taken to increase the percentage of those from less well-off households who vote. [201755]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission aims to be inclusive of the entire electorate in its provision of public awareness information. It produces materials in a variety of formats and uses a wide selection of media outlets. In addition, the Commission has a programme targeting hard to reach groups, including 16 to 24-year-olds outside formal education, and a grants programme.

Overseas Voter Registration

30. **Mr. Evans:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what discussions the Electoral Commission

has had with British embassies and high commissions on assisting them to encourage overseas voters to register for general elections. [201756]

Mr. Viggers: Electoral Commission staff have had discussions with officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the provision of information to overseas posts about electoral registration and voting. The Commission informs me that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has offered to circulate publicity material produced by the Electoral Commission (such as leaflets and posters) through its network of overseas posts and via its website.

TREASURY

ATM Machines

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what research he has commissioned on the incidence of use of ATM machines by *(a)* pensioners and *(b)* benefit recipients in areas in the immediate vicinity of closed former sub-post offices; [202547]

(2) what research he has commissioned on the number of ATM machines in the vicinity of closed former sub-post offices which make charge for use. [202546]

Mr. Timms: None. The Government are committed to tackling financial exclusion and have announced a Financial Inclusion Fund of £120 million to support measures to address financial exclusion as well as establishing a financial inclusion taskforce to monitor progress in three key areas: access to banking services, access to affordable credit and access to face to face money advice. In addition, Postwatch works closely with the Post Office to assess the implications of each proposed post office closure.

Average Earnings

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of national average earnings has been in each year since 1974 at *(a)* current prices and *(b)* today's prices; and what the real terms increase was each year. [199553]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Michael Meacher, dated 6 December 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the level of national average earnings has been in each year since 1974 at *(a)* current prices and *(b)* today's prices; and what the real terms increase was each year. (199553)

Currently average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). Prior to 1998 average earnings were estimated from the New Earnings Survey (NES), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. This is the standard definition used for ASHE and NES tables. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach a table showing the Average Gross Weekly Earnings of full time employees for 1974 to 2004 based on current and today's prices. Earnings data at today's prices has been calculated with reference to the all items Retail Prices Index (RPI). The RPI is an average measure of the change in prices of goods and services bought for the purposes of consumption by the majority of UK households. For the purposes of this calculation, it is assumed that RPI is an adequate measure of changes in retail prices faced by those particular groups covered by the ASHE.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes, but because of its sampling frame, it has difficulty capturing data on people with very low pay. It is therefore likely to under-represent relatively low paid staff earning below the tax threshold.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive. A number of estimates have been removed from the published tables for these reasons.

Average gross weekly earnings for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for pay period was not affected by absence

£

	Average gross weekly earnings at current prices	*Average gross weekly earnings at today's[1] prices*
1974	41.7	287.9
1975	54.0	306.4
1976	64.2	306.4
1977	70.2	285.2
1978	79.1	297.8
1979	89.6	306.4
1980	110.2	309.6
1981	124.9	313.1
1982	136.5	312.8
1983[2]	148.3	326.7
1983	147.4	324.8
1984	159.3	333.7
1985	171.0	335.0
1986	184.7	351.2
1987	198.9	362.8
1988	218.4	383.3
1989	239.7	389.4
1990	263.1	390.5
1991	284.7	397.2
1992	304.6	407.5
1993	316.9	418.6
1994	325.7	419.4
1995	336.3	419.1
1996	351.5	427.7
1997	367.6	436.7
1998[3]	384.5	439.1
1998	392.5	448.3
1999	407.8	458.4
2000	425.1	464.1
2001	449.7	482.4
2002	472.1	499.0
2003	487.1	499.2
2004[4]	504.9	504.9
2004[5]	506.9	506.9

[1] Earnings data at today's prices has been calculated with reference to the all items Retail Prices Index (RPI). The RPI is an average measure of the change in prices of goods and services bought for the purposes of consumption by the majority of UK households. For the purposes of this calculation, it is assumed that RPI is an adequate measure of changes in retail prices faced by those particular groups covered by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

[2] 1974 to 1983 compiled on basis of men aged 21 + and women aged 18 +.

[3] 1983 and 1984 onwards compiled on basis of employees on adult rates.

[4] 1998 to 2003 are figures from the NES survey with ASHE methodology applied.

[5] 2004 ASHE data including supplementary surveys to improve coverage.

Source:
1974 to 1997 New Earnings Survey, Office for National Statistics
1998 to 2004 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Cancer Treatment (Bassetlaw)

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the survival rate for patients with cancer at Bassetlaw hospital was in each of the last 20 years. [201091]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Mann, dated 6 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the survival rate for patients with cancer at Bassetlaw Hospital was in each of the last 20 years. (201091)

Cancer survival rates are only available for specific cancers and hence do not indicate overall survival rates for all cancer patients. Rates are not available for individual hospitals, NHS Trusts or Primary Care Organisations. However, figures for the major cancer sites are available for current Strategic Health Authorities and were previously produced for the former Health Authorities.

The latest available one and five-year survival rates at the sub-national level are for patients[1] diagnosed during 1994–96 and followed up to 31 December 2001. These data are available for Trent strategic health authority, which contains Bassetlaw primary care trust.

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D8028.xls

Figures for earlier years were for North Nottinghamshire health authority (which included Bassetlaw Hospital). These covered: patients diagnosed during 1992–94 and followed up to the end of 1999,

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D4878.xls

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D5388.xls

and patients diagnosed during 1993–95 and followed up to the end of 2000.

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D5389.xls

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D5392.xls

[1] Adults aged 15–99 years.

Carers

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many carers *(a)* under the age of 18 years and *(b)* between five and 15 years in (i) England, (ii) each constituency and (iii) each local authority are providing unpaid care for (A) up to 20 hours, (B) between 20 and 49 hours and (C) 50 hours or over a week. [201222]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Paul Burstow, dated 6 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for the number of carers *(a)* under the age of 18 years and *(b)* between five and 15 years in (i) England, (ii) each constituency and (iii) each local authority, providing unpaid care for (A) up to 20 hours a week, (B) between 20 and 49 hours and (C) 50 hours or over a week. (201222)

Figures from commissioned table C0399 indicate that on Census day (29 April 2001) there were 139,199 people aged under 18 years providing unpaid care in England of which 90,431 were aged between 5 and 15 years. The extract below shows the distribution of these carers according to the number of hours of care provided per week.

Number of people in households under the age of 18 providing unpaid care in England

Number of people in households under the age of 18 providing unpaid care in England

		Provision of unpaid care			
	Total	*Provides no care*	*Provides care: 1 to 19 hours*	*Provides care: 20 to 49 hours*	*Provides care: 50 or more hours*
Total	11,053,793	10,914,594	116,823	12,284	10,092
0–4	2,923,246	2,923,246	—	—	—
5–15	6,931,600	6,841,169	76,685	7,026	6,720
16–17	1,198,947	1,150,179	40,138	5,258	3,372

Source:
Table C0399 Census 2001(Commissioned Table

Specially commissioned table C0398 has been run to identify the number of people aged under 18 years and *(b)* the number of people aged between 5 and 15 years who are providing unpaid care in each Parliamentary Constituency in England. The table shows the distribution of these carers according to the number of hours of care provided per week. This has been placed in the House of Commons Library and can also be accessed on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/op15.asp.

Specially commissioned table C0399 has been run to identify the number of people aged under 18 years and *(b)* the number of people aged between 5 and 15 years who are providing unpaid care in each Local Authority District in England. The table shows the distribution of these carers according to the number of hours of care provided per week. This has been placed in the House of Commons Library and can also be accessed on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/op15.asp.

Correspondence

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Paymaster-General will reply to the letter of 10 November from the hon. Member for Spelthorne, about a constituent, Miss K. McDermott. [202735]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Departmental Advertising/Expenditure

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201698]

Mr. Timms: In the last two financial years, the only advertisements placed by the Treasury have been for the purpose of staff recruitment and the Treasury has not placed adverts in any media aimed at specific religious or ethnic minority groups.

The Treasury uses a wide variety of different publications for recruitment advertising, tailored according to the nature of the vacancy to be filled. This includes the use of professional journals and magazines, national and local newspapers, and websites.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in the last two years. [202493]

Mr. Timms: None.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202495]

Mr. Timms: None.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202503]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 25 October 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1055–56W, to the hon. Member for Stratford-upon-Avon (Mr. Maples) and the hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr. Lewis)

Departmental Mobile Phones

Andrew Selous: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202168]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 20 October to the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Prisk).

Drug-related Deaths

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many drug-related deaths there were in *(a)* Blyth Valley and *(b)* South Northumberland in each of the last five years. [202056]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Ronnie Campbell, dated 6 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many drug-related deaths there were in *(a)* Blyth Valley and *(b)* South Northumberland in each of the last five years. (202056)

Available figures relate to deaths from drug poisoning, not the total number that were drug-related. Figures are available for the Shire County of Northumberland and local authorities within the county. The most recently available information is for deaths in 2002. Figures are shown in the table below for these areas for the calendar years 1998 to 2002.

Number of deaths from drug-related poisoning[1], local authorities within the Shire County of Northumberland[2], 1998 to 2002[3]

Local authority	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Northumberland Shire County	12	20	19	16	24
Alnwick	*	*	*	*	*
Berwick-upon-Tweed	*	*	*	*	*
Blyth Valley	*	6	5	5	8
Castle Morpeth	*	*	*	*	*
Tynedale	*	*	*	*	*
Wansbeck	5	8	7	6	6

* Small numbers (Figures between 0 and 4) have been suppressed to protect patient confidentiality.
[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E962.0 and E980.0-E980.5 for 1996 to 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes FJ1-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, X85 and Y10-Y14 from 2001 onwards.
[2] Usual residents.
[3] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

EU Institutions

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* Ministers in other Departments, *(b)* representatives of other member states and *(c)* the European Commission regarding the quality of accounting practices in the EU institutions. [202660]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor and other Treasury Ministers have had a number of discussions about the Commission's accounting practices and need for reform with other member states and the European Commission, most recently at the Budget ECOFIN on 25 November on the occasion of the presentation of the European Court of Auditors' annual report. Other UK Government Departments contribute to the briefing for these meetings.

External Trade Commissioner

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next plans to meet the European Commissioner for External Trade. [199807]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor and other Treasury Ministers have already met several of the new Commissioners including Charlie McCreevy, Dalia Grybauskaite and Danuta Hubner meetings with other members of the new Commission will follow in due course as part of normal Treasury business.

Government Administration (Staff Numbers)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a statement on the change in the number of people employed in central Government administration between 1997 and 2004. [201508]

Mr. Timms: Data concerning Civil Service numbers between 1997 and 2004 has been published annually in Civil Service Statistics. Current information for 2004 can also be found online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/index.asp.

International Finance Facility

Tony Baldry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to whom 'the International Finance Facility will be accountable. [202665]

Mr. Timms: The UK's proposal is that the IFF will be a temporary financing framework specifically designed to raise and allocate money needed to meet the millennium development goals by 2015. It will be subject to a set of overarching principles, which will govern disbursement and will be agreed at the establishment of the IFF, and which could include, for example, conditions that funds must be used for poverty reduction and not tied to contracts using suppliers from the donor country. Participating donors will therefore control the IFF's mandate on poverty reduction and its accountability. Reflecting the partnership between donor countries and developing countries, recipient countries would have a significant role within the facility.

Job Vacancies (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many unfilled job vacancies there were in Pendle in the last period for which figures are available. [203039]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Gordon Prentice, dated 6 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about job vacancies in Pendle. I am replying in his absence. (203039)

Figures for vacancies in total are only available from the Office for National Statistics Vacancy Survey, which provides information at national level only. For local areas, figures for vacancies held by the Jobcentre Plus administrative system are available for periods up to April 2001. However, due to changes to that system, more recent figures are only available on a reliable basis for newly notified vacancies.

In April 2001 there were 601 unfilled vacancies which had been registered to Jobcentres in the Nelson and Colne travel to work area. An equivalent figure for Pendle is not available.

The Jobcentre Plus vacancy figure represents only those vacancies notified to Jobcentres, not all vacancies in an area.

Minimum Wage

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of how many people in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland are being paid below the minimum wage. [201496]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 6 November 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question about how many people in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland are being paid below the minimum wage. (201496)

The Office for National Statistics calculates estimates of the number of jobs paid less than the minimum wage, and below various other earnings thresholds, for the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions. A guide to measuring low pay and associated articles and data can be found on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=5837&Pos=1&ColRank=272

Estimates for Parliamentary Constituencies are not available.

Mortgage Lenders (Dual Interest Rates)

Ross Cranston: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many customers benefited following the ruling by the Financial Ombudsman Service in the lead cases involving dual interest rates by mortgage lenders; what the total amount involved was; and whether this is the largest sum awarded to customers following a ruling on a particular issue. [201598]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Ombudsman Service tell me that they first started to receive complaints about dual variable interest rates, in 2001. The Financial Ombudsman Service continued to receive these types of complaints until early 2004. In total, the Financial Ombudsman Service has received 7,256 such complaints. Of the 7,256 complaints received, the Financial Ombudsman Service upheld approximately half of them in favour of the consumer. Where the Financial Ombudsman Service upheld cases, the remedy was to require the lenders concerned to recalculate borrowers' mortgage rates, based on the lower standard rate. In some cases, the remedy also took into account any early repayment charge that a borrower may have paid. The Financial Ombudsman Service does not have a record of the monetary value of these awards.

MRSA

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how often the MRSA virus was listed as a cause of death on a death certificate in the most recent period for which figures are available. [201518]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Derek Wyatt, dated 6 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many times the cause of death at the Medway Maritime Hospital has been recorded as being due to the MRSA bacterium. I am replying in his absence. (201533)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2002. The figure for Medway Maritime Hospital was provided in a written answer published in Hansard on 22 July 2004, column 471W.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201561]

John Healey: One written question, which first appeared on the day before Prorogation, did not receive a substantive answer in the 2003–04 session. The hon. Member concerned retabled the question on 23 November and it was answered substantively by the Financial Secretary on 30 November.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202550]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers are committed to answering parliamentary questions promptly: that is to say, on the day nominated by the questioner, in the case of named day questions; and, for ordinary written questions, within a working week of tabling. No target exists for the maximum acceptable response time.

In the 2003–04 session, 79 per cent. of House of Commons written questions to the Treasury were answered on time.

Savings

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a statement on the change in personal and retirement saving between 1997 and 2004. [201291]

Mr. Timms: Individuals save in a variety of assets, from deposit accounts, pensions, stocks and shares, to homes and businesses.

Total household assets—including savings, pensions, life insurance and housing—currently stand at over £6 trillion. Total household net wealth—the excess of household assets over debt—has risen by around 50 per cent. in real terms since 1997.

The Government are committed to a policy framework that enables people to choose how and when to save across the full range of asset-building activities.

Government policy on saving and pensions has had a very positive effect. The Government provides tax support of £2 billion every year for savers through Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) and other products, resulting in increased take-up of ISAs by both low-income groups and the young. The Government also provides generous tax relief for pension saving worth over £11 billion per year in net terms to individuals and employers and is simplifying the pensions regime by replacing eight regimes with just one, providing greater choice and flexibility to 15 million pension savers.

The Government's wide-ranging support for saving and pensions includes: empowering individuals with financial information; promoting simpler, fairer and more trusted savings and pensions products, including through the suite of 'Stakeholder' products; and providing targeted incentives and support for saving throughout people's lives—from childhood, to working life and into pension age, including through the Child Trust Fund, Individual Savings Accounts, pensions and the use of matching, as in the Saving Gateway.

Unemployment (Bassetlaw)

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* unemployed claimants and *(b)* long-term unemployed claimants there were in the Bassetlaw constituency in each year since 1990. [201088]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Mann, dated 6 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about how many unemployed claimants and long term unemployed claimants there were in the Bassetlaw constituency in each year since 1990. (201088)

For the years 1990 to 2003, the attached table shows annual averages of: *(a)* All Job Seeker's Allowance claimants resident in the Bassetlaw constituency; and *(b)* among those, the numbers claiming for over 12 months.

JSA claimants resident in the Bassetlaw constituency

Annual average	*All claimants*	*Claimants over 12 months*[1]
1990	2,946	617
1991	3,565	793
1992	4,168	1,223
1993	4,512	1,519
1994	4,729	1,639
1995	4,019	1,491
1996	3,488	1,270
1997	2,639	870
1998	2,246	625
1999	2,060	485
2000	1,788	390
2001	1,854	310
2002	1,570	225
2003	1,195	140

[1] Computerised claims only.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus administrative system.

Video Conferencing

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [200726]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is as follows:

HM Treasury

The Treasury's five video conferencing units (VCs) provide facilities for all the department's staff. There are no plans to increase the number of VCs.

HM Customs and Excise

Eight VC units provide facilities to approximately 25 per cent. of Customs' staff. There are plans to install three or four additional VCs.

Inland Revenue

123 of the Inland Revenue's 716 offices (17 per cent.) have VC facilities. The department aims to have 300 units by 2007.

Royal Mint

One VC is available at the Royal Mint's site. There are no current plans to acquire more VCs.

Office of Government Commerce

There are 13 VCs serving all of OGC's offices. A review of existing facilities is planned for 2005.

Office for National Statistics

Seven VCs serve 80 per cent. of ONS offices. Two further units are at present planned and a review of VC facilities is under way.

National Savings and Investments

Four units cover all of NS&I's sites. There are no plans to extend VC facilities.

Valuation Office Agency

No VC facilities at present, but plans to install VCs in six locations by April 2005.

Debt Management Office

Government Actuary's Department

No VCs installed and none planned for the foreseeable future.

Wage Levels

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the lowest living wage in the UK. [201541]

Mr. Timms: Because costs of living vary between households of different types and across the country it is not possible to estimate a definitive living wage for the UK.

The Government have introduced the national minimum wage to ensure a fair minimum income from work, and the working and child tax credits which enhance work incentives and provide financial support to families. The tax credits respond to family size and circumstances, providing additional income on top of earnings targeted on those who need it most.

CABINET OFFICE

Anti-war Protesters

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to her answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 4W, on anti-war protesters, whether the three intruders who reached an office within the building were detected immediately on entering the building; and what measures are being put in place to prevent a similar incident in future. [202828]

Ruth Kelly: All four protesters were detected on entering the building; one was challenged immediately, the other three were stopped and challenged a few minutes later once additional security staff had been deployed to the scene. Following the incident immediate measures were taken to reinforce security at the front entrance of the building as a necessary precaution. The Cabinet Office is also reviewing all security procedures.

Cabinet Committee Meetings

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many meetings of each Cabinet Committee of which he is a member have been held since his appointment; and how many of these meetings he has attended. [201874]

Mr. Milburn: I sit on 19 Cabinet Committees.

It has been established practice under successive Governments not to disclose information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet Committees under Exemption 2 of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many departmental mobile telephones were used by *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials in her Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202758]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Prisk) on 4 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 838W.

Ministerial Cars

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what *(a)* instructions and *(b)* guidance her Department has issued to the Government Car Service concerning the procurement of ministerial cars, with particular reference to purchasing British-manufactured automobiles, where British models offer at least as good value-for-money as equivalent overseas models; [202524]

(2) if she will make a statement on her Department's procurement policy with regard to ministerial cars manufactured by British firms. [202565]

Ruth Kelly: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library, and is printed as follows:

Letter from Nick Matheson to Mr. Oliver Heald, dated 6 December 2004:

The Minister of State for the Cabinet Office has asked me in my capacity as the Chief Executive responsible for the Government Car and Despatch Agency to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about procurement of ministerial cars.

In establishing whether a particular car is suitable for use by the Government Car Service I have to be satisfied that I am achieving value for money, that I meet the guidelines set by the Prime Minister and that I comply with European Union procurement regulations. I cannot favour one manufacturer over another purely on the grounds of the country of manufacture of a particular vehicle.

Special Advisers/Civil Servants

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what his policy is on using *(a)* the services of civil servants, *(b)* departmental e-mails and *(c)* the services of his special adviser for party political fundraising. [202158]

Mr. Milburn: Civil servants and special advisers carry out their duties in accordance with the requirements of the Civil Service Code and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers as appropriate.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether *(a)* his special adviser and *(b)* civil servants who report to him have sent e-mails in respect of (i) fundraising and (ii) celebrity or other endorsement purposes to Ministers or their advisers since his appointment. [202159]

Mr. Milburn: I refer the hon. Member to a letter from the Cabinet Secretary to the hon. Member for Woodspring (Dr. Fox) on 30 November 2004. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what her policy is on using the services of *(a)* special advisers and *(b)* civil servants in her Department in relation to party political (i) fundraising campaigns and (ii) celebrity or other endorsements. [202160]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Milburn) gave him today.

PRIME MINISTER

Climate Change (UK Presidencies)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister, if he will list the outcomes he aims to achieve in terms of progress on climate change from the UK presidency of *(a)* the G8 and *(b)* the EU. [202152]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 22 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 1295W.

Correspondence

Mr. Burns: To ask the Prime Minister, if he will require Government departments replying to hon. Members' constituency casework to address their responses to hon. Members' House of Commons offices, when the correspondence raising the case has issued from the hon. Member's office in the House. [201256]

The Prime Minister: Replies to Members' correspondence should be sent to the originating office unless hon. Members specifically request otherwise.

This will be made clear in the next edition of Cabinet Office guidance on the Handling of Members' Correspondence.

Equatorial Guinea

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Prime Minister whether *(a)* he, *(b)* Ministers and *(c)* officials had discussions in an official capacity with the former right hon. Member for Hartlepool during the last 12 months concerning Equatorial Guinea. [200919]

The Prime Minister: I have had no discussions at any time about Equatorial Guinea with the former right hon. Member for Hartlepool. Officials in No. 10 discussed with him on one occasion recent media reports that named him in connection with the attempted coup.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Prime Minister, when he first learned of the attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea. [201703]

The Prime Minister: As my Official Spokesman made clear on Monday 29 November 2004, I did not have prior knowledge of an attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea. I first became aware of this issue when media reports of an attempted coup surfaced in March.

Europe Day

Mr. Brady: To ask the Prime Minister how he plans to celebrate Europe Day on 9 May 2005. [202659]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe (Mr. MacShane) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 64W.

Iraq Survey Group

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the final copy of the Iraq Survey Group's Report. [202755]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Jack Straw) on 12 October 2004, *Official Report*, columns 151–55, to the answers I gave at the Prime Minister's questions on 13 October 2004, and to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Croydon, South (Mr. Ottaway) at Prime Minister's questions on 3 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 308.

Ministerial Committees

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister, on how many occasions since 1 January 2004 the Ministerial Committee on Intelligence Services has met. [202107]

The Prime Minister: This information is withheld under Exemption 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Information as it relates to the Proceedings of a Cabinet Office.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Office's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201397]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Office's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201458]

The Prime Minister: The information is not held in the format requested.

All Special Advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Bichard Report

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Chief Constable of the Police Service Northern Ireland is taking to implement the recommendations of the Bichard report. [200517]

Mr. Pearson: It is clear that this is an important challenge for the whole of the UK and I welcome Sir Michael's recommendations. Although his report does not specifically apply to Northern Ireland, we recognise

its importance and we have therefore taken the initiative across Government as a whole to ensure they are appropriately applied to Northern Ireland. As a key partner in this critical work, the Police Service of Northern Ireland has established an internal working party to explore the implementation of the Bichard recommendations in the Northern Ireland policing context. The working party comprises operational detectives, staff with particular experience in child protection issues and the investigation of sexual offences, as well as officers with expertise in IT systems and data protection legislation. In addition, a core of staff is working full-time on this project under the direction of the working party.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on implementing the recommendations of the Bichard and Kelly reports as they apply to Northern Ireland. [201095]

Mr. Pearson: Although neither the Bichard report nor the Kelly report apply explicitly to this jurisdiction, it is clear that both contain vital lessons for Northern Ireland. The Government welcome the important protections for children and vulnerable adults contained within the recommendations of these reports, and recognises that it is critical that they should be given the appropriate effect in Northern Ireland. We are therefore taking positive steps to ensure that Northern Ireland benefits from these new measures.

Urgent work is being taken forward across Government to implement the recommendations of the Bichard Report. In Northern Ireland, a range of organisations are working in partnership to achieve this, including: the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety; the Department of Education; the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers; the Police Service of Northern Ireland; the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Northern Ireland Office. A key part of this work will be supporting the implementation of the Kelly Report.

In addition, we are also working closely with colleagues in the Home Office, the Department for Education and Skills, and others to ensure that work in Northern Ireland is effectively coordinated with the wider UK implementation programme. In driving this work forward, however, it will clearly be crucial to take the particular needs of Northern Ireland into account.

Civil Service

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil service jobs have been relocated from the Greater Belfast area to each of the constituencies outside Belfast and North Down in the past five years. [200083]

Mr. Pearson: 40 civil service jobs were relocated from the Greater Belfast/North Down area to the constituency of Foyle in the financial year 2001–02 as a result of a decision to centralise the NICS superannuation functions formerly carried out within Departments. In the year 2002–03 the Department for Social Development relocated 36 jobs to Foyle as a result of the creation of a new Pension Service co-located in Londonderry and Belfast.

Consultants

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each of the last 10 years. [201946]

Mr. Pearson: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1633W.

Derelict Buildings (Derry)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many buildings in Spencer road in Derry are classified as derelict; what estimate he has made of the value in rates that these buildings would contribute if they were brought back into use as business premises; and how many of these buildings are in Government ownership. [201264]

Mr. Spellar: Government do not hold information on the number of buildings on Spencer road that are classified as derelict. Valuation and Lands Agency has confirmed that derelict property does not appear in the Valuation List, as it is not capable of occupation. The Valuation and Lands Agency only assesses the rateable value of such property if and when it becomes capable of occupation. No estimates are made of potential rates liability except in the case of buildings which are to be refurbished for future Government occupation and which are to be subject to an economic appraisal. No such estimates have been prepared for buildings on Spencer Road.

In relation to property in Government ownership, the Department for Social Development owns the Distillery Brae site, which fronts onto Spencer road and comprises 11 vacant and derelict buildings, and a site at the junction of Spencer road and Lower Fountain Hill, comprising 350 sq m of land.

Driver and Vehicle Testing Centres

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the average waiting time is for people applying to take a driving test at each driver and vehicle testing centre in Northern Ireland. [201133]

Angela Smith: The following table shows the average waiting time between 9 August and 29 November 2004 for all driver test categories.

Test centre	*Average (days)*
Armagh	33
Ballymena	36
Balmoral	16
Coleraine	39
Cookstown	36
Craigavon	25
Dill Road	17
Downpatrick	43
Enniskillen	62
Larne	47
Lisburn	41
New Buildings	18
Newry	54
Newtownards	44
Omagh	43
Waterside	50

The overall average waiting time for all driver test categories from 9 August to 29 November 2004 was 38 calendar days.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many people are waiting on the list for a driving test in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* each of the driver and vehicle testing centres in Northern Ireland; and what the average time is that people are on the pending list in each case. [201134]

Angela Smith: At 1 December 2004 there was a total number of 675 people on the pending list—defined as applications received but not yet appointed—for all driver categories. The following table shows the breakdown by test centre.

The average time for customers on the pending list is not available for each centre, but the average for all centres is 26 days.

Test centre	*Applications pending*
Armagh	6
Ballymena	11
Balmoral	327
Coleraine	15
Cookstown	1
Craigavon	51
Dill Road	121
Downpatrick	11
Enniskillen	4
Larne	8
Lisburn	5
New Buildings	47
Newry	27
Newtownards	3
Omagh	12
Waterside	26

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional resources have been allocated to the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency in Northern Ireland to help with the backlog of MOT tests following recent industrial action and to reduce the waiting time for people applying for a driving test in Northern Ireland. [201135]

Angela Smith: The Agency is working to restore normal services as soon as possible. Steps being taken include the recruitment from 1 November 2004 of 30 additional staff, the introduction from 1 October 2004 of a more efficient booking programme, and additional overtime working. Certificates of temporary exemption, which allow vehicles to be taxed and driven legally until they can be tested, are being issued where appointments cannot be offered within 21 days. The measures introduced for vehicle testing have the effect of removing some vehicles temporarily from the testing cycle and freeing up capacity to allow the Agency to focus on priority vehicle testing categories and driver testing.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200172]

Mr. Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. MacShane) on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 10W.

Illegal Drinking

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to review the legislation relating to illegal drinking in public in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [202877]

Mr. Spellar: A review of legislative measures to control drinking in designated public places is currently being undertaken by the Department for Social Development. A proposal for new primary legislation giving district councils and the police new tougher and more effective powers to deal with this problem will be published in 2005.

People Trafficking

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has received regarding the trafficking of people to the Province for prostitution. [202042]

Mr. Pearson: The Police Service of Northern Ireland has conducted a number of inquiries into suggestions of people-trafficking to Northern Ireland for the purposes of prostitution. There is presently no evidence to suggest that this is taking place in Northern Ireland. The Police Service of Northern Ireland is acutely aware of the problems experienced in other jurisdictions and they continue to monitor the situation closely.

Resources

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact the level of resources available in 2004–05 will have on *(a)* education and *(b)* health provision. [200188]

Angela Smith: A total of £1.655 billion has been allocated for Education in 2004–05, a 7.9 per cent. increase on 2003–04. This is to maintain service levels, provide for ongoing costs of teachers' pay progression, support for special education pupils, and schools in interface areas, as well as measures to take forward the reform of post-primary education and the new Northern Ireland Curriculum. It will also provide for significant investment in the schools estate.

In light of overspending by two Education and Library Boards in 2003–04, these Boards are having to take measures to contain expenditure within their 2004–05 allocations. Containment plans received from both Boards are being examined carefully to assess the impact that their proposed actions are likely to have and the scope there might be to minimise any impact on front-line services.

In health and social services, a total of £3.125 billion has been allocated for 2004–05. This investment has enabled levels of services delivered in previous years to be maintained and is also providing for a range of service development across a number of key priority areas. These include, for example, action designed to improve access to GPs and other primary care professionals, an increase of the number of people being supported in community settings, continued action to reduce hospital waiting lists and waiting times, an increase of the number of patients with arthritis who have access to drug therapies, the provision of better support for children and young people in need and the continued promotion of healthier lifestyles.

Unemployment (Lagan Valley)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the unemployment levels for the Lagan Valley constituency were in each year since 1997. [202747]

Mr. Gardiner: Claimant count unemployment numbers and rates for the Lagan Valley Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) for the month of October of each year from 1997 to 2004 are as follows.

October each year	*Number unemployed*	*Rate*
1997	1,914	3.1
1998	1,787	2.9
1999	1,333	2.1
2000	1,122	1.8
2001	1,122	1.8
2002	1,020	1.6
2003	982	1.5
2004	878	1.4

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Dobson Report

10. **Mr. Roger Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects her Department to respond to the report "Getting serious about play" by the committee chaired by the right hon. Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Mr. Dobson). [201766]

Estelle Morris: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will write to the right hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras shortly setting out her response to his review.

Cricket (Zimbabwe)

11. **Mr. Garnier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she has met the England and Wales Cricket Board to discuss future matches in Zimbabwe. [201767]

Mr. Caborn: Neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor I has met the ECB to discuss future matches in Zimbabwe and we have no plans to do so in the near future. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said on 6 May, at a joint press conference with David Morgan, Chairman of the ECB, and myself: "It is appropriate for the Government to express a view about issues of this kind. We would have preferred the tour to be postponed until the situation in Zimbabwe improves. But it is right that in our system it is for sporting authorities to make the decisions in cases such as this".

ITV Regional Companies

14. **Mrs. Brooke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has held with Ofcom regarding ITV's regional television commitments. [201770]

Tessa Jowell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon Member for Selby (Mr. Grogan) regarding regional commitments.

National Lottery/Grants

15. **Ann McKechin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what contribution grants from Lottery distributors have made to combating social exclusion in Glasgow. [201771]

Estelle Morris: Lottery distributors are required to take into account the need to reduce economic and social deprivation in making awards.

It can be difficult to determine precisely the extent of their contribution to reducing social exclusion but a significant number of Lottery-funded projects have helped to regenerate inner cities, create employment and strengthen communities. Glasgow, Maryhill has received over 300 awards totalling over £46,000,000 from the Lottery.

20. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the areas of the country that have received the lowest Lottery funding. [201776]

Estelle Morris: The Government want to see all areas of the country and all sections of the population benefiting from the huge success of the National Lottery.

We consulted widely on the Lottery and our reforms will provide a more streamlined and transparent application process for applicants, so that more communities can benefit.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment her Department has made of the use of National Lottery grants in combating social exclusion in Lancashire and the north-west. [201769]

Estelle Morris: Lottery distributors are required to take into account the need to reduce economic and social deprivation in making awards.

It can be difficult to determine precisely the extent of their contribution to reducing social exclusion but a significant number of Lottery-funded projects have helped to regenerate inner cities, create employment and strengthen communities. Burnley has received over 200 awards totalling over £12,000,000 from the Lottery.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was spent on lottery tickets in Pendle constituency in the latest 12-month period for which figures are available; and what the total for lottery awards in Pendle was during the same period. [201711]

Estelle Morris: The National Lottery operator, Camelot, do not collect ticket sales information on a constituency basis and do not routinely collect ticket sales on a postcode basis. They have however been able to provide an updated table detailing sales by postcode area since the lottery began. I am arranging for copies of the updated table to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. In 2003–04 there were 26 awards in Pendle to a total value of £998,482.

Disability Discrimination Act (Compliance)

17. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has given to English Heritage on the advice it gives to those responsible for bringing town and village halls into compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. [201773]

Estelle Morris: The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has not issued formal guidance to English Heritage (EH) in relation to implementation of the DDA 1995 to historic properties. EH is the statutory advisor on all aspects of the historic environment. They are fully responsible for assisting owners and occupiers of historic buildings and sites in complying with the requirements of the 1995 Act.

BBC (Regional Services)

18. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what account she will take during BBC charter renewal of the services provided by the BBC to the nations and regions of the UK. [201774]

Tessa Jowell: The BBC's services to the nations, regions and communities of the UK are central to Charter Review—indeed my independent adviser, Lord Burns, recently hosted a public seminar on exactly this subject. Full transcripts and video are available from the Charter Review website.

Children's Activities

19. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made on her Department's target on activity for children. [201775]

Estelle Morris: We share with the Department for Education and Skills a Public Service Agreement target to increase the percentage of school children spending a minimum of two hours each week on high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and 85 per cent. by 2008. A survey of over 6,000 schools in school sport partnerships, published this April, showed that we are making good progress with over 62 per cent. of pupils taking up two hours.

Creative Partnerships

James Purnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the progress made by Creative Partnerships towards the Government's plans to offer a universal cultural entitlement to all children and young people. [199733]

Estelle Morris: The aim of Creative Partnerships is to give children and young people, particularly those living in disadvantaged areas, access to rich and diverse cultural experiences through working directly with artists and other creative professionals. 25 Creative Partnerships have been established so far, with a further 11 due to begin in September 2005. By this time coverage will have extended to 65 local education authority areas. Creative Partnerships is already having a significant impact. By November 2004, there had been over 217,000 attendances by young people at more than 2,500 projects, and the programme had also provided over 141,000 hours of professional development to teachers and creative professionals.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in her Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202153]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Prisk) on 19 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 605W.

Digital Television

Mr. Peter Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* the BBC and *(b)* other analogue television providers about the extension of digital television services in rural Britain. [201768]

Tessa Jowell: Discussions are currently taking place between the Government, Ofcom, the BBC, and the other Public Service Broadcasters on the detailed plans for switchover.

The Government are committed to ensuring that all households who can currently get public service broadcasting channels in analogue form, including those in rural areas, can continue to receive them on digital systems at switchover.

Everest (Sagarmatha) National Park

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will support the proposal that UNESCO place the Everest (Sagarmatha) National Park on the World Heritage Danger List. [201934]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker) on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 173W. As a member of the World Heritage Committee we will

consider the information requested at the 29th session and whether the threats justify recommending that the site be placed on the World Heritage in Danger list.

Gambling Commission

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the budget to set up the proposed Gambling Commission will be found from within the departmental budget for 2005–06. [202062]

Mr. Caborn: Assuming enactment of the Gambling Bill currently before the House, provision will be made from the departmental budget in 2005–06 to enable the Gambling Commission to be established; but additional provision will be needed in the following year to enable the commission to take on all the responsibilities which the Bill gives it.

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Reform and Modernisation Funding Budget for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* future years within the National Museum and Galleries division of her Department has been (i) partially and (ii) fully diverted elsewhere. [202063]

Estelle Morris: The Reform and Modernisation budget is a small fund of £10 million held centrally by DCMS. It is not held by the Museums and Galleries Division and it is available to all the Department's funded bodies, although funds have been allocated to Museums and Galleries from this source in 2004–05. The allocation of funds for 2005–06 has yet to be determined. No decision has yet been taken about the size of the fund in future years.

School Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much of the £750 million pledged by the Prime Minister to school sport has been *(a)* committed and *(b)* spent. [202718]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have invested £750 million in the New Opportunities for PE and Sport Programme across the United Kingdom. £581 million was allocated to England, of which £25 million was passed to the Space for Sport and the Arts Programme and £30 million set aside for football projects to be distributed via the Football Foundation. Of the remaining £526 million, £336.9 million had been committed and £22.4 million spent by October 2004. 1,000 awards have been made across all local education authorities.

The programme is ahead of schedule and is on course to have the great majority of new facilities in place by spring 2006, as planned. We expect that the majority of funding will be committed by the end of 2004, ahead of the 2005 deadline set in the Policy Directions.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sportwhat the target for participation in school sport is in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* France, *(c)* Germany, *(d)* Spain, *(e)* Italy, *(f)* Denmark and *(g)* Sweden. [202741]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills share a Public Service Agreement target to increase the percentage of 5–16 year olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport to 75 per cent. by 2006; and to 85 per cent. by 2008. This Department does not hold information about the targets set in other countries.

Sports and Community Clubs

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sportwhat action she is taking to reduce the costs of compliance with the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 for sports and community clubs. [202719]

Mr. Caborn: The Government's policy is for licensing fees to be set at a level that allows full recovery of the administration, inspection and enforcement costs falling on licensing authorities. It would be wholly wrong for the taxpayer to subsidise the consumption of alcohol, and it would be difficult to argue that the best way to promote sport is through Government subsidising sports club bars. To ensure fair and equitable arrangements, the fees will be in graduated bands based on the non-domestic rateable value of the premises concerned. Most sports and community clubs will fall at the lower end of these variable fee levels. The draft fees for the new licensing regime were published on 4 November and are open to consultation until 23 December. We have invited comments from sports and community clubs as part of that consultation and will carefully consider all responses before the fee levels are finalised.

Swimming Pools

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to prevent closures of *(a)* indoor and *(b)* outdoor swimming pools in London. [201772]

Mr. Caborn: There are currently 104 swimming pools in London open to the public.

The Government accept that all sports facilities eventually come to the end of their useful life and need to be closed or replaced. However, it is important that we continue to provide new or replacement swimming facilities where there is a gap in local provision.

In the last ten years Sport England has awarded lottery grants for the construction of 92 swimming pools in this country, and eight of these were London projects.

DEFENCE

Anthrax (Gulf War)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the anthrax supplied by the American Type Culture Collection was the same strain as that used to treat United Kingdom service personnel during the first Gulf War. [200077]

Mr. Caplin: As far as we are aware the American Type Culture Collection does not currently hold any strain of anthrax on its catalogue.

Anthrax is not used and has never been used to treat British Troops.

Army Recruitment

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what control measures on recruitment have been placed on each level of the Army over the past three years. [200015]

Mr. Caplin: Minor adjustments to recruiting are made routinely from time to time, in order to achieve required Army manpower numbers and to ensure a correct balance between individual Arms and Services. Occasionally this results in some individuals who successfully pass through the selection process being given delayed dates to commence their Phase One (basic) training.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [200813]

Mr. Ingram: Summaries of Ministry of Defence expenditure on external assistance, of which consultancy is a part, are available in the Libraries of both Houses for financial years 1995–96 to 2003–04. However, expenditure on external consultants is not recorded as a specific category, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Telephones

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost to his Department of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic numbers and *(b)* international numbers in the last year for which figures are available. [201111]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Bills are scrutinised by individual sites and further investigations made if abuse of the telephone service is suspected.

EU Military Staff

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list UK personnel serving on the EU military staff; and what the role of each is. [201570]

Mr. Hoon: On 16 November 2004 the UK had 18 personnel employed in the EU Military Staff.

1. Brigadier—Policy and Plans Division—Assistant Chief of Staff

2. Captain (RN)—Chief of Staff's Office—European Defence Agency Establishment Team

3. Colonel—Logistics and Resources Division—Head of Logistics Section

4. Commander—Operations and Exercises Division—Staff Officer Exercises

5. Commander—Logistics and Resources Division—Staff Officer Logistics

6. Commander—Policy and Plans Division—Staff Officer Concepts

7. Lieutenant Colonel—Chief of Staff's Office—Liaison to EU Special Representative Office, Sarajevo

8. Lieutenant Colonel—Operations and Exercise Division—Staff Officer Crisis Management

9. Lieutenant Colonel—Communications and Information Systems Division—Staff Officer Policy and Requirements Section—Geo-spatial

10. Wing Commander—DG BUMS Executive Office—Staff Officer EUMS Coordination

11. Wing Commander—Intelligence Division—Staff Officer Intelligence Production

12. Wing Commander—Logistics and Resources Division—Staff Officer Resources Support

13. Wing Commander—Communications and Information Systems Division—Staff Officer Policy and Requirements Section

14. Warrant Officer—Intelligence Division—Warrant Officer Production

15. Sergeant—Policy and Plans Division—Administrative Assistant

16. Corporal—Communications and Information Systems Division—Administrative Assistant Policy and Requirements Section

17. Civilian Grade C—Chief of Staffs Office—PA

18. Civilian Grade C—Logistics and Resources Division—Secretary

EU Political and Security Committee

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to whom the UK's representative to the EU Political and Security Committee is responsible. [201666]

Mr. Hoon: The United Kingdom's representative on the EU Political and Security Committee is responsible for conveying the views of the Government. Ultimately he is responsible, through the line management chain, to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

European Defence Agency

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date the UK joined the European Defence Agency. [201665]

Mr. Hoon: The European Defence Agency was formally established on 12 July 2004, under the Council Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP, whereupon the United Kingdom became a participating member state.

Frontline Capability

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effect that the proposed reductions in *(a)* Commander-in-Chief Fleet, *(b)* Commander-in-Chief Land Command, *(c)* Commander-in-Chief Strike Command and *(d)* Chief of Defence Logistics will have on frontline capability; and if he will make a statement. [200476]

Mr. Hoon: The alterations to budgetary allocations for the CinC Fleet, CinC Land, CinC Strike and DLO included in Winter Supplementary Estimates represent decreases in depreciation and cost of capital charges

relating to previously planned fixed asset holdings. The changes bring these Top Level Budgets into line with the revised defence programme announced on 21 July 2004.

Future Surface Combatant Vessels

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions have been made about the prospects for the Future Surface Combatant vessel for the Royal Navy; and if he will make a statement. [199532]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Future Surface Combatant (FSC) project is still in its concept phase. No decisions have yet been taken about the timescale for delivering the FSC capability, and studies continue to develop ideas for the platform solution.

HMS Daring

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the expected in-service date is for HMS Daring; and when he expects it to be fully operational. [201638]

Mr. Ingram: The current forecast for the in-service date of the first of class T45, HMS Daring, is mid 2009. The ship is planned to be fully operational shortly after this date once the Ship's company have completed the necessary Operational Sea Training.

Iraq

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether napalm or a similar substance has been used by the Coalition in Iraq *(a)* during and *(b)* since the war. [201991]

Mr. Ingram: No napalm has been used by Coalition forces in Iraq either during the war-fighting phase or since.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what roles Iraqi troops are undertaking in Iraq. [201285]

Mr. Ingram: Iraqi Security Forces, including the Iraqi Police Force, the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi National Guard, the Facilities Protection Service and the Department of Border Enforcement are undertaking a wide range of law-enforcement and internal security tasks in Iraq, in combination with coalition forces. Recent operations have demonstrated that they are becoming increasingly capable at fulfilling these duties.

Military Operations (EU)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where provision will be made within the UK public expenditure arrangements for the cost of the UK contribution to EU military operations. [200378]

Mr. Hoon: The cost of the United Kingdom contribution to military operations will be met from within total planned public expenditure. It is likely that most of the agreed UK costs will be met from within the contingency provision set aside in spending reviews to cover such eventualities.

Missile Defence System

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on discussions between US Lieutenant General Obering and his Department in relation to the UK hosting interceptor missiles for the US missile defence system; [202082]

(2) which UK military bases have been considered for the citing of interceptor missiles as part of the US missile defence system. [202083]

Mr. Hoon: The Government have not yet decided whether the United Kingdom requires its own missile defence, and has not received a request from the US to base interceptors in the UK as part of the US missile defence system. It would therefore be premature to consider specific military sites for basing interceptors, or any other part of a missile defence system for the UK. Contacts with the US, including Lieutenant General Obering and other US officials, cover a wide range of issues related to missile defence but do not involve discussions about specific sites.

Parachute Pay

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* soldiers in the Army are in receipt of parachute pay. [201001]

Mr. Ingram: According to the Army records on pay and allowances, there were around 330 officers and 2,640 soldiers in receipt of parachute pay as at 26 November 2004.

Private Land (Military Exercises)

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on *(a)* the use of private land by his Department for military exercises and *(b)* the mechanism for obtaining consent for such use from private landowners. [200742]

Mr. Caplin: The use of private land for military training generally involves long standing relationships between the Ministry of Defence and private landowners. Consent for the use of private land is obtained via a variety of means ranging from formal leases to periodic ad-hoc agreements with the owners.

Staffing

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* established and *(b)* non-established personal staff support (i) the Chief of the Defence Staff and (ii) the Chief of the General Staff, broken down by (A) rank, (B) job title, (C) regiment and (D) annual salary. [201076]

Mr. Caplin: CDS' Personal Office consists of the following:

1. Commodore, Personal Staff Officer to CDS, Royal Navy, Salary band for rank: £78,226.80 to £81,562.90.

2. Group Captain, Deputy Personal Staff Officer to CDS, Royal Air Force, Salary band for rank: £65,218.20 to £72,083.85.

3. Lieutenant Colonel, Military Assistant to CDS, Royal Artillery, Salary band for rank: £56,315.85 to £62,254.40.

4. Captain, Aide-de-Camp to CDS, Army Air Corps, Salary band for rank: £31,853.55 to £37,883.35.

5. Civil Service Band D, Personal Assistant to CDS, Civil Servant, Salary range for payband D: £16,672 to £26,002.

CGS' Personal Office consists of the following:

1. Lieutenant Colonel, Military Assistant 1 to CGS, Royal Artillery, Salary band for rank: £56,315.85 to £62,254.40.

2. Major, Military Assistant 2 to COS, Royal Dragoon Guards, Salary range for rank: £40,124.45 to £48,055.90.

3. Captain, Aide-de-Camp to COS, Adjutant General's Corps, Salary band for rank: £31,853.55 to £37,883.35.

4. Warrant Officer 2, Personal Assistant, Adjutant General's Corps, Salary band for rank: £30,287.70 to £36,335.75.

All of these are established posts.

Timber

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of a central point of expertise on timber. [200577]

Mr. Caplin: We are currently considering our position on the funding of a central point of expertise for timber.

UK-US Mutual Defence Agreement

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the amendments to the US/UK 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement on atomic energy matters will enter into force; and what opportunities there will be for hon. Members formally to object to the coming into force;. [201184]

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Mutual Defence Agreement with the United States to be renewed. [202006]

Mr. Hoon: The Amendment to the 1958 US/UK Mutual Defence Agreement, including the renewal of Article III (bis) for a further 10 years, was laid before Parliament on 21 June for a period of 21 days under the Ponsonby Rule. This period ended on 22 July. The Amendment has also now completed the period it was required to lie before Congress and will shortly be brought into force by an Exchange of Notes. The Government has previously made clear that it would not undertake to find time to debate renewal of a longstanding agreement such as this.

Veterans' Illnesses (Gulf War)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the report of the US Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses; and if he will make a statement. [200076]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence is aware of the report of the US Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses and has noted its findings. The report is a review of some existing research and we were already familiar with most of the material presented.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Costs

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he has taken to ensure that telephones in his Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [201022]

Phil Hope: Access to all international numbers is only granted to staff who have a business need to make such calls. Calls to some foreign mobile networks, are barred completely. Call logs are monitored to ensure compliance.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated cost is to his Department of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international numbers. [201023]

Phil Hope: Automatic logs are kept of all calls and regular reviews carried out. From those reviews there is little evidence of unauthorised use by members of staff. When any has been identified the cost has been recovered.

Fidlers Ferry Power Station

Helen Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, if he will make a statement on the effect of the transfer of Fidlers Ferry power station from the national list to the local list on the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme; and how much money was lost to Warrington borough council as a result. [201514]

Mr. Raynsford: Warrington has made representations about the effect of the transfer of the power station on its ability to benefit from Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI), as part of the recent consultation exercise. These and other representations will be considered very carefully in deciding the final shape of the scheme.

An authority's ability to benefit from LABGI will depend not only upon the final design of the scheme but crucially on how well it performs in generating economic growth. No authority will lose money as a result of LABGI since the funding, which is worth up to £1 billion in England and Wales in the first three years, is entirely additional.

Fire Service

Kate Hoey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes have occurred to the entry level fitness tests for the fire service since 2000. [201856]

Phil Hope: The 1978 regulations which included entry level fitness tests were replaced on 25 March 2004 by the Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) Regulations (England and Wales) 2004. These included a general requirement that an appointee's general state of health and fitness should be satisfactory to carry out the duties of the role. Consultants who are experts in the field of physical and psychological testing were appointed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to draw up new advisory point of entry selection tests in consultation with stakeholders. Concerns that previous fitness tests may have had specific adverse impact on the

recruitment of women are being addressed in the development of the new tests, which are expected to be available in May 2005. Pending the completion of these tests, it is the responsibility of each fire and rescue authority to ensure that any tests or procedures used for the selection and appointment are relevant to the job and do not unfairly discriminate on any grounds.

Gypsies and Travellers

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, if he will make it his policy to license caravans used by Gypsies and Travellers to facilitate identification of the owner when this is needed to enforce planning law and policy. [201594]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not intend to introduce such a policy. If licensing and registration of caravans was to be introduced, it is very difficult to see how it could be restricted to particular categories of keeper, such as "Gypsies" or "Travellers".

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, under what ethnic status Gypsies and Travellers are classified in relation to planning law. [201668]

Keith Hill: The planning definition of a gypsy does not rely on ethnicity. Gypsies are defined in section 16 of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 as persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, who wander or travel for the purpose of making or seeking their livelihood.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether regional spatial strategies are required to take account of provisions for Gypsies and Travellers; and whether they will specify pitch numbers that must be provided by each local authority in the region. [201670]

Keith Hill: Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs must, in the future, be assessed by each local authority as part of the overall local housing assessment process. Data from these assessments will feed into the evidence which underpins Regional Housing and Spatial Strategies. The Regional Planning Body will consider overall regional need and put into the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) the amount of site provision needed in each local authority area during the RSS period.

High Hedges

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made since the completion of the consultation process on the implementation of the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 relating to high hedges; and if he will make a statement. [202628]

Phil Hope: In the light of the responses to the consultation the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently revising the guidance for local authorities and the Regulations to bring Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 into force. We intend to issue the guidance to local authorities at the same time as we lay the Regulations before Parliament and expect the complaints system to be fully operational early in 2005.

Home Ownership

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many shared ownership properties were sold in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea in each year since 1997; and how many of those properties were purchased by someone *(a)* already in social housing in that area, *(b)* on the single housing register in that area and *(c)* a key worker. [201963]

Keith Hill: A table containing this information for every local authority in England has been made available in the Library of the House.

The table includes, for each financial year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and for every English local authority and Government Office Region:

- the number of shared ownership sales;
- how many shared ownership sales were to people who were previously social tenants in the area;
- how many shared ownership sales were to people who were registered on a local authority waiting list/common housing register.

Note that the figures relate to the sales of initial shares only. Subsequent purchases of additional equity are not included.

It should be noted that figures on the number of key workers that bought shared ownership properties during the period 1997–98 to 2003–04 are not available. This is because the purchaser's occupation was not collected as part of CORE Sales during this period.

Homelessness

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless households were in temporary accommodation in Shrewsbury and Atcham *(a)* in May 1997, *(b)* in June 2001 and *(c)* at the latest available figures. [200286]

Keith Hill: Local authorities report their activities under homelessness legislation quarterly, and this includes the number of homeless households in various forms of temporary accommodation as on the last day of the quarter. Information reported by Shrewsbury and Atcham DC is tabled as follows. At the 30 June 2004, 70 per cent. of households were accommodated in stock owned by a Registered Social Landlord; and 29 per cent. were in hostel accommodation. There was only one household in B&B type accommodation.

Homeless households[1] in temporary accommodation arranged by Shrewsbury and Atcham district council

	Number
31 March 1997	39
30 June 1997	40
30 June 2001	121
30 June 2004	77

[1] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by authorities.

Note:
Data are not available for the position in May 1997

Source:

ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Housing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which authorities have decided their stock options appraisal in favour of *(a)* stock transfer, *(b)* arm's length management organisation, *(c)* private finance initiative and *(d)* stock retention by the council; how many homes each authority has in each case; which authorities have yet to advise his Office of their intentions; and how many homes they own in each case. [200319]

Keith Hill: The tables made available in the Library of the House show what options each of the 233 authorities that owned stock at 1 of April 2004 have chosen in order to meet the decent homes target. Prior to this date 131 had authorities transferred their stock. Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is never a whole stock solution and so authorities that have chosen PFI for part of their stock are listed separately. Some authorities have more than one PFI scheme.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what estimate he has made of the total amount spent over the last two years by councils in *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* other fees, *(c)* information, *(d)* videos and *(e)* other ways in ballots for large-scale voluntary transfers or arm's length management organisations (ALMOs); what proportion of this sum was accounted for by funding provided to councils by his Department; how much was charged to successful registered social landlords and ALMOs; and how much was lost in unsuccessful ballots. [200560]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect information on the amount spent by local authorities on activities in preparation for ballots for large scale voluntary transfers or arms length management organisations. It is up to individual authorities to decide how much they will spend on these activities.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what estimate he has made of the amount of private capital brought into social housing by large-scale voluntary transfers in each of the last four available years. [200561]

Keith Hill: The estimated amount of private finance investment available to large scale voluntary transfers that have taken place in the last four years is tabled.

	Amount of private finance (£ billion)
2001	1.39
2002	1.59
2003	1.10
2004	0.71
Total	4.79

Housing (Overcrowding)

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to issue a consultation paper on the revision of standards for determining levels of overcrowding. [201966]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hopes to publish a consultation paper on the overcrowding standards in March.

Housing Stock

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list local authorities that have transferred their housing stock to a registered social landlord, giving in each case *(a)* the date of the ballot and *(b)* the percentage for and against transfer. [201797]

Keith Hill: The details of local authorities who have transferred their housing stock to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), the date of transfer and the percentage of tenants who voted in favour and against has been made available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average amount spent renovating a property in each of the Pathfinder areas in England was in the latest period for which figures are available. [201798]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not available. Information about the average dwelling costs for elements of market renewal Pathfinders' programmes—including refurbishment—will be collected annually. Data for the year ending 31 March 2005 will be submitted by 15 July.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to postpone changes to the local government pension scheme until after the consultation for a new scheme to be introduced in April 2008 has been completed. [201664]

Phil Hope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 125W.

Millennium Dome

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much *(a)* the maintenance of and *(b)* security at the Millennium Dome (i) cost in 2003–04 and (ii) has cost to date in 2004–05. [199566]

Keith Hill: In 2003–04, expenditure incurred on maintenance of the Dome site was £755,000 and £580,000 was incurred on security.

In 2004–05, up to the end of September, expenditure incurred on maintenance of the Dome site was £261,000 and £285,000 was incurred on security.

Ministry of Defence Land

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what role English Partnerships is playing in the disposal of Ministry of Defence land; which sites are involved; and if he will make a statement. [200034]

Keith Hill: English Partnerships and Defence Estates announced on 10 November the agreement of a framework document setting out arrangements to work closely together on the future use of surplus defence land. These joint working arrangements are intended to allow Defence Estates to deliver its disposal programme and for English Partnerships to help deliver the objectives set out in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan (February 2003).

Following the publication of the Communities Plan, the Government have put in place arrangements through English Partnerships to make better use of surplus public sector land, including setting up a Register of surplus land held by central government bodies.

The agreement between English Partnerships and Defence Estates covers sites that are or will become surplus to Defence requirements. The use of these sites to help deliver the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan will now be considered before they are put on the open market. This is in line with arrangements established for the Register of surplus public sector land and procedures set out in Government Accounting.

Official Visits

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list each foreign country he has visited on an official visit since 1997, broken down by date. [202574]

Phil Hope: The Government publishes a list of all visits overseas by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500 on an annual basis. The list for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 was published by the Prime Minister on 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 465W. The next list for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 will be published at the end of the financial year.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his announcement on 1 November of new transport powers for elected regional assemblies represented an addition to the powers set out in the Draft Regional Assemblies Bill. [201961]

Mr. Raynsford: This announcement was made by the Labour Party and made clear that an elected regional assembly would have a significantly greater role and say in transport issues than the present regional chamber.

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister confirmed in a statement to the House on 8 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 587–89, that the Regional Assemblies Bill would not be introduced in this session of Parliament.

Regional Government

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost was of the activities performed by the Electoral Commission in connection with *(a)* the regional referendum in the North East and *(b)* preparation for the referendums in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. [201812]

Mr. Raynsford: Questions on the Electoral Commission's expenditure should be directed to the Commission itself.

South West Regional Spatial Strategy

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost was of producing and publishing, "What will the South West be like in 2026? Regional spatial strategy for the South West 2006–2026", issued by the South West Regional Assembly. [201958]

Mr. Raynsford: The consultation document on the Regional Spatial Strategy was produced as a result of South West Regional Assembly's role as the designated regional planning body.

The document starts the consultation process for the statutory Regional Spatial Strategy which will set the framework for development in the South West between 2006 and 2026 and supersede County Structure Plans.

The total cost of producing and publishing the Regional Spatial Strategy Options consultation documents was in the order of £12,000. This comprises £4,300 for producing the executive summary, £4,700 for producing the technical document, and £3,000 for distribution.

Street Cleanliness

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what steps his Department is taking to promote business-community partnerships to tackle graffiti, litter and street cleanliness. [200604]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 124W.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has put in place the necessary legislation to enable businesses to vote to improve their trading environments by becoming business improvement districts (BIDs). The additional services or activities that would be funded by a BID levy will be decided by local businesses.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will also publish guidance to the BIDs regulations in spring 2005, which will incorporate the good practice and lessons learnt from the 22 pilot BIDs in the Association of Town Centre Management's National BIDs Pilot project.

HEALTH

Bassetlaw Primary Care Trust

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much Bassetlaw Primary Care Trust has received in each year of its existence. [201086]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Allocation for Bassetlaw primary care trust

	£ million	Increase in real terms Percentage	Increase in cash terms Percentage
2002–03	80.4	6.0	8.6
2003–04	87.9	6.9	9.3
2004–05	96.7	7.4	10.1
2005–06	107.7	8.6	11.3

Source:
Department of Health 2003–04 to 2005–06 primary care trust revenue resource limits exposition book

Carers

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the varying provision which local authorities make for assisting carers. [202914]

Dr. Ladyman: It would be short sighted of councils not to support their carers. Councils should be taking the needs of carers into account when planning and commissioning all services. To encourage councils to improve carers' services further we are in discussion with Social Care Institute of Excellence to develop a good practice area on the Department's carers website. We anticipate that it will serve as a benchmark for councils.

We have introduced a new carers' performance indicator, which will ensure that councils recognise that support for carers continues to be a priority for the Government.

Chernobyl

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will examine the research report by Martin Tondall and his colleagues, published in the *British Medical Journal* in November, on cancer incidence and the Chernobyl accident. [201185]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Departmental officials and National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) colleagues are aware of the report published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health by M. Tondall et al. The NRPB continues to monitor research in this area.

Child Health

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is proposing to control *(a)* obesity among and *(b)* alcohol consumption by children; and if he will make a statement. [200051]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The foundation for all future work to tackle childhood obesity will be taken forward through the recently published Government White Paper, "Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier", tackling the risk factors of diet and physical inactivity. The Government will publish a delivery plan for the White Paper next year. As part of this delivery programme, we will also publish national delivery plans focusing on nutrition and activity, including the food and health action plan and the physical activity plan.

The Government has also introduced a new public service agreement target, jointly owned by the Department for Health, Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, to halt "the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole".

Regarding alcohol consumption by children, a social responsibility code is being developed with industry that will provide a code of best practice around manufacturing and sale of alcohol. One of its elements is to stop the sale of alcohol to children. The Department for Education and Skills, in consultation with the Department of Health and the Home Office, will use the findings of the blueprint research programme to ensure that future provision of alcohol education in schools addresses attitudes and behaviour as well as providing information.

Childhood Asthma

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were diagnosed with asthma in *(a)* England, *(b)* Gloucestershire and *(c)* Stroud constituency in (i) 1974, (ii) 1980, (iii) 1990, (iv) 2000 and (v) the latest year for which figures are available. [202774]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

The new primary medical care contracting arrangements from April 2004 include the use of indicators and information management across specific chronic disease areas, including asthma, to deliver improved outcomes for patients. In time, we expect that this data will provide an invaluable source of information on the disease areas covered.

Eye Tests (Lancashire)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many free eye tests for pensioners there have been in Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale in each year since 2000. [200994]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures for the number of sight tests by constituency or by pensioners are not collected centrally.

The table shows the number of national health service sight tests paid by East Lancashire health authority (HA) for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2003 and the three primary care trusts (PCTs) covering the old East Lancashire HA for the year ending 31 March 2004.

General ophthalmic services: number of sight tests paid by East Lancashire HA for patients aged 60 and over for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2004

	HA name–PCT name	Number of sight tests for aged 60 and over (000)
1999–2000	East Lancashire HA	24.5
2000–01	East Lancashire HA	39.8
2001–02	East Lancashire HA	40.8
2002–03	East Lancashire HA	43.6
2003–04	Blackburn with Darwen PCT	13.3
	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	19.9
	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	10.8
Total	East Lancashire HA	44.0

Notes:

1. Eligibility for NHS sight tests was extended to patients aged 60 and over from 1 April 1999. PCTs took over responsibilities from HAs in October 2002.

2. Sight tests can not be equated to the numbers of patients. Although most people do not come back for a sight test within the year, some patients suffering from medical conditions are advised to have re-examinations sooner. However, some patients aged 60 and over will be eligible for sight tests for other reasons as well, for example, on income grounds. The classification for such patients will depend on the patient and the practitioner.

Fitness Trainers (NHS)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether those who pay membership of private health clubs will qualify for a fitness trainer on the national health service. [201354]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The service to be provided by accredited national health service health trainers will be available to all NHS users in England and will provide advice, motivation and practical support for people to define the changes in lifestyle they want to make, what they can do and how they can access other help and services in making and sustaining changes.

Five a Day Logo

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which *(a)* organisations and *(b)* products have adopted the Department of Health's 5 A DAY logo. [199458]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The 5 A DAY logo was launched in March 2003. To date, over 400 organisations have adopted the logo of which over 100 are commercial organisations, the remainder being national health service trusts, local authorities and not-for-profit bodies. 65 of these organisations have been granted a licence to use the 5 A DAY logo on product packaging; and between them feature the logo on over 700 products.

Well-known organisations and brands using the 5 A DAY logo include Asda, Co-op, Iceland and Aldi supermarkets, Costcutter, Nisa-Today's and T & S convenience stores, Boots' Shapers range, Tropicana fruit juice, Julian Graves health food stores, Whitworth's and Sundora dried fruit, McDonald's fruit bags, and Sodexho, Compass and Avenance caterers.

Food Poverty

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions he has had on tackling food poverty. [201520]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 2 December 2004]*: The consultation process for the "Choosing Health" White Paper involved discussions between departmental Ministers and a number of stakeholders, both within and outside Government, on diet and nutrition issues, including the issue of inequalities in access to a healthy diet.

"Choosing Health" has set out a range of measures for improving diet and nutrition, with an emphasis on engaging with disadvantaged communities.

Planning for the implementation of this and a number of other initiatives announced will be covered in a delivery plan for the White Paper and the food and health action plan, to be published early in 2005.

Food Supplements

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) when Ministers last met representatives of Consumers for Health Choice to discuss strategies for achieving the addition to the lists of permitted ingredients set out in the Annexes of the Food Supplements Directive of ingredients on the United Kingdom market that are omitted from those lists; and what progress has been made in securing the addition of such ingredients to the lists; [200243]

(2) what advice his Department plans to give to enforcement authorities on the bringing of prosecutions against the manufacturers and retailers of safe food supplements which contain ingredients that become illegal under the Food Supplements (England) Regulations after July 2005; [200244]

(3) how many products he estimates will be affected by the implementation of the Food Supplements Directive and the Food Supplements (England) Regulations 2003; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the removal of food supplements by this implementation on *(a)* the businesses of the manufacturers and retailers of such products and *(b)* consumer choice. [200371]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I met with Consumers for Health Choice on 7 September 2004 to discuss the implications of the Food Supplements Directive (FSD).

Since that meeting the Health Food Manufacturers Association and Food Standards Agency (FSA) officials have met with officials from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Commission to discuss the implications of the FSD. It was made clear at those meetings that before further ingredients may be added to the lists in the FSD they must be assessed for safety through submission of a dossier and have received a positive opinion from the EFSA.

The United Kingdom Government has nevertheless made clear that providing an ingredient was on the market before July 2002 and a dossier has been submitted to a member state that ingredient can remain on sale in the UK pending an opinion by EFSA following its safety evaluation.

The FSA will advise enforcement authorities of those vitamins and minerals, and their permitted sources, listed in the regulations and products where derogation has been provided by the UK following submission of a dossier to a member state and where the product was on sale before July 2002. Such vitamins and minerals will be able to be sold legally in the UK after 1 August 2005 pending an opinion from the EFSA. Enforcement of the Regulation and decisions regarding prosecutions is a matter for the Authorities.

A regulatory impact assessment was carried out on the FSD and before the Food Supplements (England) Regulations 2003 were signed and laid in Parliament. This assessed the impact of the Directive on businesses and consumer choice.

The Directive and Regulation list 28 vitamins and minerals and 112 sources from which they may be derived for use in food supplements. The UK will allow additional ingredients to continue to be used as food supplements after 1 August 2005 providing they were on sale before July 2002 and a dossier containing safety data has been submitted to a member state by 12 July 2005.

Free Personal Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will estimate the number of people in England who receive free personal care; [200597]

(2) if he will estimate the total cost for the Government to provide free personal care in England for those people whose income levels mean they are currently eligible for this care. [200598]

Dr. Ladyman: No information is held centrally on the numbers of people who receive personal care services but do not make a contribution towards the cost of those services.

Greater Manchester Surgical Centre

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on what date he expects the Greater Manchester Surgical Centre to open; [201871]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact on hospitals in Greater Manchester of the Greater Manchester surgical centre. [201872]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Greater Manchester strategic health authority reports that the Greater Manchester surgical centre will see its first patients for pre-operative assessment in January 2005, with treatment beginning in February. The centre expects to treat 44,800 patients over the next five years.

The centre will provide additional capacity, which will help other hospitals in the area to improve their waiting lists and waiting times.

Health Services (Lewisham, Deptford)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses were employed by the NHS in health facilities in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2004. [201100]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not available in the format requested. Information for Lewisham hospital NHS trust and Lewisham primary care trust is shown in the following table for the years 1997, 2001 and 2003, which is the latest year available.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) doctors, general medical practitioners (excluding retainers), nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff and GP practice nurses for specified organisations

1997

		All doctors	HCHS doctors[1]	Of which: General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)[2]	Nurses	Of which: Nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	GP practice nurses
QO7	South East London	3,663	2,795	868	10,845	10,338	507
	Of which:						
	Lewisham hospital NHS						
RJ2	Trust	[3]—	202	[3]—	[3]—	848	[3]—
5LF	Lewisham PCT	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—

2001

		All doctors	HCHS doctors[1]	Of which: General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)[2]	Nurses	Of which: Nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	GP practice nurses
QO7	South East London	4,279	3,375	904	12,122	11,533	589
	Of which:						
	Lewisham hospital NHS						
RJ2	Trust	269	269	[4]—	906	906	[4]—
5LF	Lewisham PCT	159	[4]—	159	93	[4]—	93

2003

		All doctors	HCHS doctors[1]	Of which: General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)[2]	Nurses	Of which: Nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	GP practice nurses
QO7	South East London	4,514	3,535	979	14,440	13,930	510
	Of which:						
	Lewisham hospital NHS						
RJ2	Trust	279	279	[4]—	1,085	1,085	[4]—
5LF	Lewisham PCT	176	10	166	448	355	93

[1] Excludes hospital medical hospital practitioners and hospital medical clinical assistants, most of whom are GPs working part-time in hospitals.
[2] All practitioners (excluding retainers) includes GMS practitioners, PMS practitioners, GP registrars.
[3] Denotes not available.
[4] Denotes zero.

Notes:
1. GP retainers were first collected in 1999 and have been omitted for comparability purposes.
2. PCTs did not come into existence until 1 April 2000, prior to this data was only available at health authority level which does not compare with present day organisational structure.
3. Data as at 30 September each year except GP and practice nurse data as at 1 October 1997.

Sources:
1. Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics
2. Department of Health Medical and Dental Workforce Statistics
3. Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

Health White Paper

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the percentage of pubs in the *(a)* Northern region and *(b)* Tees Valley area which serve food which will cease to do so when the smoking ban is implemented. [201503]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In the White Paper we estimated that 10 to 30 per cent. of pubs in England might fall into the category of "do not prepare food". A regional breakdown of this figure has not been made. We believe that with food providing an increasing proportion of most pubs' turnovers, it is reasonable for the Government to proceed on the assumption that it makes good business sense for pub owners to continue to serve food. We will consult widely on this area in drawing up the detailed legislation.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has commissioned on the introduction of a food signposting system as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 26; and when he expects this research will be completed. [199457]

Miss Melanie Johnson: On Thursday 25 November the Food Standards Agency published research showing that consumers would strongly support a front of pack signposting scheme to make informed and healthier food choices easier. The research tested five signposting options, two of which consumers felt had significantly more promise than the others. The Agency will now work with stakeholders to examine a number of these options in more detail to identify which is most likely to be helpful in practice.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the competency framework for NHS professionals outlined in Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 16, to become part of the training programme; whether it will include all NHS staff; and if he will make a statement. [199469]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The implementation of this and a number of other initiatives announced will be covered in a delivery plan for the White Paper to be published early in 2005.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the evidential basis is for the statement in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 77, that profitability of providing food will outweigh any incentive for pub owners to stop serving food in order to exclude their premises from a ban on smoking. [199471]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East (Dr. Kumar) today.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many copies of the Annual Report of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) were printed; and how many *(a)* hits and *(b)* unique visits were made to the annual report pages on the HFEA website in the four days following its publication. [200635]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has advised that 1,500 copies of its 2003–04 annual report were printed. The report appeared on the HFEA's website on the afternoon of 25 November. During the following four days, 26 to 29 November, a total of 513 hits were made on the website to view the report. Data is not available on the number of unique visitors. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

Jobs Website

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the companies which submitted bids to his Department to develop and run the jobs.nhs.uk website project. [200748]

Mr. Hutton: The companies which submitted bids were:

Guardian Media Group
Parity Group PLC
Northgate Information Systems
Methods Application Ltd.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what charges have been paid by NHS organisations for the use of the jobs.nhs.uk website to date; and how much he expects to be receiving from NHS organisations for use of the website in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [200751]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has not made any charges and does not expect to do so. We are providing this as a central service to the national health service. Responsibility for managing the service will move to the NHS employers' organisation from April 2005.

Mental Health

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many young people are waiting to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, broken down by region; what the average waiting time to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services is; and if he will make a statement. [199745]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table. This information is taken from the Department's 2003 child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) mapping exercise.

Information on average waiting times for patients to see CAMHS staff is not collected centrally.

The Government are committed to improve access to CAMHS and to reduce waiting times. The Department is investing an additional £300 million into CAMHS during the period from 2003–04 to 2005–06. The recently published children's national service framework sets out the standard for CAMH services.

CAMHS—cases waiting and length of wait as at December 2003

Region	*0–13 weeks*	*14–26 weeks*	*Over 26 weeks*	*Total*
London	3,465	895	581	4,941
South East	3,004	1,080	1,434	5,518
South West	1,550	813	704	3,067
East	1,905	695	263	2,863
West Midlands	1,946	957	889	3,792
East Midlands	1,381	426	462	2,269
Yorkshire and Humber	1,765	633	569	2,967
North West	2,397	801	781	3,979
North East	859	275	153	1,287
Total	18,272	6,575	5,836	30,683

Notes:
1. CAMHS are defined for the purposes of this table, means specialist CAMHS or, as often referred to, Tiers 2 to 4 CAMHS. The numbers include referrals from all sources, including general practitioners, social services and education.
2. Length of wait is the period from the date that the patient is referred to CAMHS to the date that the patient is first seen by CAMHS for an initial assessment.

Mental Health Services (Buckinghamshire)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether Wycombe Primary Care Trust has recently withdrawn funding from Wycombe Mind. [201866]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In accordance with our policy of "Shifting the balance of Power", primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for commissioning care to get the best services for local people, subject to the highest clinical standards and best value for money. It is for each PCT to decide what money it allocates to each particular strand of their local health service according to its assessment of local need.

I therefore suggest that the hon. Member liaises directly with his local PCT on this matter.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust and Wycombe Primary Care Trust has recorded changes made to the provision of services by charities and voluntary groups to people with mental health problems in south Buckinghamshire; [201867]

(2) what representation Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust and Wycombe Primary Care Trust has received about the recent closure of the Fixiquip programme. [201868]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", it is now for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to plan, develop and improve services for local people. We recognise that health services are better when management is devolved to the frontline. Within the framework set out in the "NHS Plan" and other policy documents, PCTs, with their specialised knowledge of the local community are effectively able to manage and improve local services.

I therefore suggest that the hon. Member liaises directly with the local national health service on this matter.

NHS Cleaners

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cleaners, as distinct from other ancillary staff, were employed by the NHS immediately prior to the introduction of market testing for these services in 1983. [199949]

Mr. Hutton: Data on the number of cleaners employed by the national health service in 1983 is not held centrally.

Ozone

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what evidence he has gathered to support a connection between levels of ozone in the atmosphere and premature deaths; and if he will make a statement. [200689]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department's Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP)[1] summarised the evidence on the connection between levels of ozone in the atmosphere and premature deaths in 1998. It was concluded that an association existed and was reasonably consistent across Europe and the United States. Further research has been published since that time, including, very recently, two large studies combining results from groups of European cities and groups of US cities. An updated review of the health effects of ozone, under preparation by COMEAP, will address this new evidence and will be published next year.

[1] Department of Health Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants Quantification of the Effects of Air Pollutants in the United Kingdom—The Stationery Office London 1998.

The Department has also commissioned researeh in the United Kingdom on this issue. Details are included in the list of Department's funded air pollution research projects at the website address given below and a copy has been placed in the Library[2].

[2]www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/AirPollution/fs/en.

Peninsula Medical School

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been made available to establish the Peninsula Medical School. [199865]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's funding for medical schools takes the form of the Service Increment for Teaching (SIFT). This reimburses national health service organisations for the extra costs they incur by providing clinical placements for medical and dental undergraduates. SIFT funding for the Peninsula Medical School is shown in the table. Investment by the Higher Education Funding Council for England is a matter for my hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Department for Education and Skills.

	SIFT (£000)
Capital	
2000–01	483
2001–02	2,046
2002–03	4,994
2003–04	12,286
2004–05	742
Revenue	
2000–01	0
2001–02	325
2002–03	2,963
2003–04	6,518
2004–05	11,830

Between 2001 and 2003, £2 million was allocated non-recurrently from the NHS research and development budget to the local NHS partners of the Peninsula Medical School to invest in facilities for research associated with the school, and in 2002–03 £146,250 was allocated recurrently to mobilise and support research in the school.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list primary care trusts which have taken over management of local social services. [201992]

Dr. Ladyman: Care trusts are established on a voluntary basis where there is a joint agreement at a local level that this model will offer the best way to deliver better health and social care services. Partner organisations then delegate agreed functions to the care trust, but can withdraw if they so choose.

To date, eight such partnerships have been forged, leading to the establishment of care trusts in Sandwell; Sheffield, Bexley, Bradford, Camden and Islington; Manchester, Northumberland; and in Witham, Braintree and Halstead. The local primary care trusts are partners in two of these agreements: in Bexley, and in Witham, Braintree and Halstead.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budgets for this financial year are for the five primary care trusts in Suffolk; and what budget has been set for managerial and administrative costs of each. [201325]

Dr. Ladyman: The allocations for the five primary care trusts (PCTs) in Suffolk are shown in the table.

PCT	*Amount (£ million)*
Ipswich	137.5
Waveney	123.6
Suffolk Coastal	88.0
Suffolk West	195.0
Central Suffolk	80.2

As PCTs now have responsibility for planning the provision for health care services locally, they also have responsibility for deciding what part of their budgets are allocated to management and administrative costs.

Psychiatric Wards (Young People)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he is taking to ensure safeguards are in place to protect young people held on adult psychiatric wards; [200341]

(2) how many cases of assault have occurred against young people held in adult psychiatric wards in each year since 1997. [200342]

Dr. Ladyman: The children's national service framework (NSF) sets a standard that:

"services ensure that attention is paid to child protection needs (in line with Area Child Protection Committee policies) and the dignity and safety of young people cared for in adult psychiatric beds".

The NSF also recommended that a protocol must be agreed between the child and adolescent mental health service and the adult service that will safeguard the young person's safety and dignity.

In February 2004 we published Developing Positive Practice to Support the Safe and Therapeutic Management of Aggression and Violence in Mental Health Inpatient Settings to enable mental health service providers to review their current policies and procedures relating to education, training and practice in the safe and therapeutic management of aggression and violence.

The National Patient Safety Agency has also identified patient safety in acute mental health settings as a priority and launched its mental health programme of work in June 2004.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the most recently estimated 2004–05 year-end financial position is for each strategic health authority as forecast *(a)* by each strategic health authority itself and *(b)* as a total of all of the forecasts of each strategic health authority's component health trusts. [201836]

Mr. Hutton: The audited information in respect of the 2004–05 financial position of all strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and national health service trusts will be published in their individual annual accounts and will be available centrally in autumn 2005. We have no plans to publish un-audited in year financial information. This information is considered to be exempt under Part 2 of the code of practice on access to Government information.

Tuberculosis/Hepatitis

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the population of England he estimates to be undiagnosed for *(a)* tuberculosis and *(b)* hepatitis C. [200103]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is not possible to generate reliable estimates on numbers of undiagnosed active tuberculosis cases in England. Most undiagnosed cases present to the health service at some point during their illness. Delays to diagnosis will result in either recovery, eventual presentation to health services with advanced disease or death.

The number of active tuberculosis cases who recover is unknown and numbers of cases who present with advanced disease are not routinely collected. The number of cases of tuberculosis diagnosed on post-mortem is collected by the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) enhanced tuberculosis surveillance system. This data represents the number of tuberculosis cases per annum who are found to have tuberculosis at post mortem. Tuberculosis is however not necessarily the cause of death or a contributory factor to death. In a large proportion of these cases, tuberculosis is likely to be an incidental finding.

The number of cumulative hepatitis C laboratory diagnoses reported, 38,000, to the HPA is lower than the estimate for the overall population prevalence. This suggests that the majority of hepatitis C infections have not been diagnosed. The estimate of the number of individuals infected with hepatitis C is 250,000, but the figure for those who have gone on to develop chronic hepatitis C infection in England is 200,000, as in some cases the infection clears spontaneously.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in how many cases hepatitis C was recognised as an underlying cause of death in the latest year for which

figures are available; and what his assessment is of the contribution of hepatitis C to mortality from chronic liver disease. [200104]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Hepatitis C was the underlying cause for 129 deaths in England and Wales in 2003. Hepatitis C is believed to contribute to some of the deaths each year from the complications of chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis and primary cancer. However, there are no routine data on the extent of this contribution.

Source:

Office for National Statistics

Vending Machines

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance his Department gives to *(a)* hospitals and *(b)* NHS trusts installing vending machines in hospitals on the type of products which should be sold; and if he will make a statement. [200425]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has issued no guidance to the national health service regarding the types of products, which should be available in public areas. Public procurement of food through the NHS offers an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in influencing access to healthier foods. We have made a commitment in the Government's White Paper, "Choosing Health: Making health choices easier" to develop nutritional standards for all foods provided by the NHS, increasing access to a range of healthier foods and taking account of the different formats of provision including restaurant, fast food and vending. Planning for the implementation of this and a number of other initiatives are under way and more details will be announced early in 2005 when the Government will publish its Delivery Plan for the White Paper.

Walnuttree Hospital (Risk Assessments)

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library the two most recent Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service risk assessments of Walnuttree hospital in Sudbury. [201605]

Dr. Ladyman: I regret that Suffolk fire and rescue services have not undertaken any risk assessments at Walnuttree hospital in Sudbury. West Suffolk hospital undertook a fire risk assessment in 2003 and I understand that copies are available from the trust.

The trust recently commissioned an independent review of Walnuttree hospital at the end of October 2004. The independent review was carried out by Auditing Investigating Management Services. The report was published on 18 November 2004 and copies can be obtained from West Suffolk hospital.

West Suffolk Hospitals National Health Service Trust met with the Suffolk divisional fire officer to agree a way forward following the recommendations made in the independent report. Suffolk fire service stated

> "they would need more time to consider the findings of the independent report. However, the service's recommendations would be aimed at ensuring that fire safety measures at Walnuttree hospital were robust enough to provide a satisfactory level of fire safety until December 2007, the expected date of the opening of the new building".

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Criminal Justice Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the implementation of Section 329 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. [201395]

Mr. Lammy: Section 329 relates to civil proceedings for trespass to the person brought by offenders, and was introduced on 20 January 2004. Figures relating to any subsequent proceedings affected by this section are not available. However, the Government are unaware of any such cases having been reported.

Legal Aid/Services

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate he has made of the administrative savings which would arise for those receiving legal aid no longer being required to pay court fees. [201915]

Mr. Leslie: My Department is currently seeking to rationalise the arrangements for the payment of court fees in proceedings where the claimant/applicant is legally aided. Revised procedures have yet to be developed and it is therefore impossible to quantify the administration savings at present.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when a Government report on the conclusions of Sir David Clementi's current review of the regulatory framework of legal services is expected. [201475]

Mr. Lammy: Sir David Clementi is due to make his recommendations by 31 December 2004. The Government will set out our plans for responding to those recommendations after the report is published.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what budget has been allocated to the Office of the Legal Services Complaints Commissioner in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Office in each year. [201901]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Complaints Commissioner was appointed on 21 February 2004. The budget for the Commissioner's office for 2004–05 is £1.34 million. 12 staff are currently employed including the Commissioner. This could rise to 16 staff pending successful recruitment campaigns. At the Secretary of State's request, the Law Society will meet all appropriate costs of the OLSCC. It has been agreed that DCA will meet the costs of: the consultants who scoped the work of the OLSCC; DCA corporate overheads; and the LSCC's salary.

LINK Project

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what progress has been made with the LINK project since it started; [201480]

(2) if he will make a statement on the Department's progress towards meeting each of its targets under the three-year LINK project; [201481]

(3) how many courts are linked as a result of the LINK project; [201482]

(4) how much *(a)* has been spent to date on implementing the targets set under the LINK project and *(b)* will need to be spent to complete the LINK project; [201483]

(5) whether the Department is on course to meet its target of rolling out the Criminal and Civil LINK infrastructures to *(a)* Crown courts and *(b)* civil and family courts by March 2006. [201910]

Mr. Leslie: There are two LINK projects, one covering criminal business, and one covering civil business. As at 30 November 2004, on the criminal court side, 73 courts had received the new infrastructure. The target to deliver to 56 courts by the end of 2003–04 was achieved, and the project is on schedule to achieve its final objective of 110 sites in total. As at 30 November 2004, £116.61 million had been spent on the project. A further £57.04 million will be required to complete the rollout.

As at 30 November 2004, on the civil court side, 26 courts had received the new infrastructure. The target to deliver to four courts by the end 2003–04 was exceeded (nine courts were live by the end of 2003–04), and the project is on schedule to achieve its final objective of 60 sites in total. As at the 30 November 2004, £9.23 million had been spent on the project. A further £11.95 million will be required to complete the rollout.

Mr. Djanogiy: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many witnesses have provided evidence by video link from suites in courts for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses introduced under the LINK scheme since the introduction of such suites; and if he will make a statement. [201484]

Mr. Leslie: The LINK Infrastructure Project has been set up to deliver a comprehensive IT infrastructure to court staff and the Judiciary in the Crown court. It does not directly provide video link equipment in courts although it does enable these links where equipment is provided. 89 per cent. of Crown court centres now have some form of video link. Records are not being kept centrally of how many witnesses have used the video links since they were introduced for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.

Magistrates Courts

Hywel Williams: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people work for the magistrates' courts services *(a)* in Wales and *(b)* in England, broken down by workplace. [202007]

Mr. Leslie: On 31 March 2004, the date of the most recent data collection, the Magistrates' Courts Service employed 11,156 people in England and 755 in Wales.

Bob Spink: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many appeals against closure of magistrates' courts there were in each of the last three years. [202296]

Mr. Leslie: The number of appeals made by paying authorities pursuant to section 56 (3) of the Justice of the Peace Act 1997 against the closure of magistrates' courts over the last three years is as follows.

In 2002 there were two appeals lodged;

In 2003 there were 15 appeals lodged; and

In 2004 five appeals have been lodged so far.

Money Claim Online Scheme

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many claims have been issued online in each year since the introduction of the Money Claim Online scheme. [201477]

Mr. Lammy: Since its launch in February 2002, the number of claims issued each year through Money Claim Online was:

	Claims
2002	14,446
2003	34,137
2004[1]	47,916

[1] (Up to and including November)

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Money Claim Online scheme has cost the Department to run in each calendar year since its introduction. [201478]

Mr. Lammy: The cost to the Department of running Money Claim Online software systems in the first quarter to March 2002 was £221,286; in 2002–03 the cost was £885,144 and for the period April 2003 to September 2004 the cost was £442,572.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Department has to increase the amount for which fixed claims can be made by means of the Money Claim Online scheme. [201479]

Mr. Lammy: My Department currently has no plans to increase the limit on the value of claims which can be made using Money Claim Online. This reflects present indications that only a small proportion of claims issued online are of a value close to the £100,000 limit.

Office of Public Guardianship

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many staff have been employed by the Office of Public Guardianship in each of the last two years; [201727]

(2) what budget has been allocated to the Office of the Public Guardianship in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Office in each year. [201902]

Mr. Lammy: The budget allocated to the Public Guardianship Office for the current financial year is made up of net administration costs of £17,540,000 and a capital budget of £1,500,000. These costs are offset against a projected net fee income of £13,960,000. In 2003–04 the Public Guardianship Office employed an average of 304 whole-time equivalent permanent civil servants, 116 agency staff and nine contract staff. In 2002–03 the Public Guardianship Office employed an average of 295 whole-time equivalent permanent staff. 159 agency staff and 14 contract staff. Full details of the Public Guardianship's financial position and staffing numbers are included in the Annual Reports and Accounts which were laid before Parliament on 26 October.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many written questions for the Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201547]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 29W.

Property Prices

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many properties in *(a)* Nelson and *(b)* Colne have sold for less that £20,000 in each year since 1997. [201012]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

Separate figures below local authority level are not readily available. However, since Nelson and Colne are both within Pendle district council, the annual sales figures for the whole of Pendle from 1997 to 2003 were as follows.

	Number of residential property sales within Pendle district council at less than £20,000
1997	341
1998	452
1999	443
2000	473
2001	522
2002	679
2003	484

Note:
The figures exclude sales to sitting tenants and any other sales believed to be below market value.
Source:
Land Registry

Small Claims

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to extend the small claims jurisdiction; and if he will make a statement. [201599]

Mr. Lammy: The Better Regulation Task Force in its report, 'Better Routes to Redress' recommended that research should be carried out into the potential impact of raising the small claims limit for personal injury cases from the current limit of £1,000. In its response to the report, published on 10 November, the Government indicated its acceptance of this recommendation. The Government also indicated that it intended to review all the financial limits that define the small claims and fast tracks, and to also consider other options in addition to raising the small claims limit for personal injury.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Call Centres

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether benefits claimants who attend at Jobcentre Plus offices must claim benefits by telephoning a call centre elsewhere; [202673]

(2) whether benefits call centre staff are able to make decisions about eligibility for benefit. [202674]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Vera Baird, dated 6 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning whether benefits claimants who attend at Jobcentre Plus offices must claim benefits by telephoning a Call Centre elsewhere, and whether benefit Call Centre staff are able to make decisions about eligibility for benefit. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

We are establishing a number of contact centres that allow customers the flexibility of using many of the services Jobcentre Plus provides without the need to travel to local offices. In areas where this new process has already commenced, customers are asked to telephone the relevant Contact Centre to make their initial claim to benefit. If a customer has already travelled to the Jobcentre Plus office, they can use a 'warm phone' in that office to make the call. In exceptional circumstances, customers may have a face-to-face interview.

Contact Centre officers do not make decisions regarding eligibility to benefits. They collect information for benefits to which customers have potential eligibility. This information is forwarded to Decision Makers for decisions on entitlement to benefits.

I hope this is helpful.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many local authority benefit fraud investigators have *(a)* commenced and *(b)* completed the Professionalism in Security Accredited Counter Fraud Officer Scheme. [200116]

Mr. Pond: Up until April 2004, 283 local authority benefit fraud investigators had commenced but not completed the Professionalism in Security (PINS) training scheme and 1,826 had completed it.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many local authority benefit fraud investigators there were in each year since 1997. [200164]

Mr. Pond: The overall aim of the Department's anti-fraud strategy is to have a benefit system which is secure from first claim to final payment. The implementation of this strategy means than an anti-fraud focus is integral to the work of all staff working in the administration of housing benefit, as is dealing with the wider agenda of error and incorrectness in benefit payments.

The number of full-time equivalent fraud investigators is in the table.

Number of full-time or equivalent benefit fraud investigators employed by local authorities

	Number
1996–97	1,900
1997–98	2,000
1998–99	2,200
1999–2000	2,100
2000–01	2,200
2001–02	1,700
2002–03	1,900
2003–04	1,400

Notes:

1. The figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.

Source:

Housing Benefit Management Information System Quarterly Administration Returns April 1996 to March 2004.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on how many occasions the new powers to obtain information from third party organisations established under the Social Security (Fraud) Act 2001 have been used. [200165]

Mr. Pond: The Social Security Fraud Act 2001 introduced powers that required the private sector, and some public sector bodies, to give authorised DWP and local authority officers information on their customers where it relates to suspicions of fraud against the benefit system.

From April 2003 until September 2004 there have been 36,181 occasions when we have asked third party organisations to provide information using powers granted by the Act. Figures are not available before then, as information was not collated centrally.

Bereavement Benefit

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much has been paid in bereavement benefit in each of the last 10 years. [201716]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Annual expenditure on widows and bereavement benefits

	£ million
1993–94	1,145
1994–95	1,111
1995–96	1,070
1996–97	1,009
1997–98	1,005
1998–99	968
1999–2000	984
2000–01	965
2001–02	1,065
2002–03	984

Notes:

1. Figures are in real terms 2004–05 prices.
2. Bereavement benefits replaced Widows benefits on 9 April 2001.

Source:

DWP Benefit Expenditure Tables.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202156]

Maria Eagle: Information is not available in the format requested.

Central records of mobile phones were not held until 1 November 2003. At that date, nine were used by Ministers and special advisers, and 11,950 were used by the Department's officials.

As of November 2004, eight mobile phones were used by Ministers and Special Advisers, and 13,786 used by officials.

Information on costs, which includes the cost of new phones, contract costs and call charges is available only for the last two quarters. These costs amounted to £409,017 for quarter ending August 2004, and £405,258 for quarter ending November 2004.

Information on the number and associated costs of mobile phones lost or stolen is not collected.

Disability Benefits

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people have claimed disability living allowance, broken down *(a)* by nation and *(b)* by region, in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement; [200234]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of people who are eligible for disability living allowance. [200235]

Maria Eagle: Entitlement to disability living allowance (DLA) can only be reliably established after a claim has been made and the care and mobility needs of the individual customer fully assessed. For this reason it is not possible to estimate the number of people who may be entitled. The requested information about DLA claims is not available. The available information is set out in the table.

DLA: Number of initial claims made in Great Britain in each year 2001–02 to 2003–04

	Number
2001–02	407,810
2002–03	433,345
2003–04	442,150

Note:

1. Figures taken from a 100 per cent. sample at 31 May 2004 each year and rounded to the nearest five.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people appealed against decisions made regarding the award of *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* severe disablement allowance and *(c)* disability living allowance in each quarter in each year since 2001; how many of these appeals were successful; and if he will make a statement. [200246]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Paul Holmes, dated 6 December 2004:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question regarding how many people appealed against decisions made regarding the award of *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* severe disablement allowance and *(c)* disability living allowance; how many of these appeals were successful, in each quarter in each year since 2001.

The information in table 1 give details of claims for incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance and disability living allowance. Table 2 shows the number of successful appeals made against the rejection of severe disablement allowance and disability living allowance, whilst table 3 shows the figures relating to incapacity benefit.

Table 1: Severe disablement allowance, disability living allowance and incapacity benefit caseloads at November 2001, 2002, 2003

	Caseload
Disability living allowance	
November 2001	2,298.0
November 2002	2,418.5
November 2003	2,549.8
Incapacity benefit claimants	
November 2001	2,342.9
November 2002	2,384.2
November 2003	2,409.2
Severe disablement allowance claimants	
November 2001	362.3
November 2002	325.9
November 2003	311.3

Benefit Data Notes:

1. Benefit caseload figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample 30 November of each year; they are not caseloads for quarters as Appeals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and are represented in thousands.
3. Incapacity benefit and severe disablement benefit figures include "credits only" cases.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

Table 2: Severe disablement allowance, disability living allowance appeals, received at the Appeals Service, cleared at hearing and in favour of appellant, for each quarter since 2001

	Severe disablement allowance			*Disability living allowance*		
	Received	*Cleared at hearing*	*Cleared in favour*	*Received*	*Cleared at hearing*	*Cleared in favour*
2001 Q1	650	475	195	25,655	27,940	14,180
2001 Q2	610	415	160	20,295	21,210	11,230
2001 Q3	525	505	220	19,730	18,965	10,000
2001 Q4	405	365	145	21,210	18,170	9,760
2002 Q1	265	325	145	22,190	19,825	10,640
2002 Q2	185	265	120	18,570	18,615	10,160
2002 Q3	190	205	100	20,070	17,575	9,320
2002 Q4	160	150	75	21,445	16,800	9,375
2003 Q1	135	140	70	21,570	18,055	9,745
2003 Q2	140	120	65	18,300	17,715	9,565
2003 Q3	110	120	55	20,765	17,265	9,070
2003 Q4	85	75	30	22,765	16,815	8,470
2004 Q1	80	80	45	22,285	20,000	10,120
2004 Q2	60	65	35	19,585	18,660	9,570
2004 Q3	55	60	35	22,605	18,440	9,340

Table 3: Incapacity benefit appeals, received at the Appeals Service, cleared at hearing and in favour of appellant, for each quarter since 2001

	Incapacity benefit (not personal capability assessment)			*Incapacity benefit (personal capability assessment)*		
	Received	*Cleared at hearing*	*Cleared in favour*	*Received*	*Cleared at hearing*	*Cleared in favour*
2001 Q1	1,645	955	360	10,670	7,240	2,970
2001 Q2	1,430	1,045	350	8,975	8,060	3,395
2001 Q3	1,505	960	350	9,770	7,255	3,215
2001 Q4	1,565	875	330	11,330	7,430	3,220
2002 Q1	1,760	1,085	380	13,435	8,720	3,650
2002 Q2	1,630	1,105	390	12,020	9,125	4,080
2002 Q3	1,835	1,140	400	12,705	9,575	4,275
2002 Q4	1,785	1,175	455	14,035	9,375	4,520
2003 Q1	1,690	1,225	505	15,420	10,315	5,010
2003 Q2	1,710	1,240	465	12,010	12,040	5,770
2003 Q3	1,710	1,125	450	13,810	9,690	4,675
2003 Q4	1,905	1,040	375	14,860	9,805	4,815
2004 Q1	2,065	1,280	435	14,785	11,275	5,275
2004 Q2	1,750	1,180	450	12,235	10,360	5,110
2004 Q3	1,650	1,160	460	12,840	10,460	5,080

Appeals Data Notes:
1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
2. Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
4. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
5. Percentages are to one decimal place and are based on unrounded figures.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of administering the appeals system for *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* severe disablement allowance and *(c)* disability living allowance in each quarter in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [200247]

Angela Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Paul Holmes, dated 6 December 2004:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to respond to your question asking what the cost was of administering the appeals system for *(a)* incapacity benefit *(b)* severe disablement allowance and *(c)* disability living allowance in each quarter in each year since 2001.

The table below shows the estimated cost for administering incapacity benefit, severe disablement benefit and disability living allowance appeals. We do not hold exact figures for each benefit type, so the amounts quoted are calculated on average administrative and judicial costs, including overheads.

2001-02

£

	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Total*
INCAP	2,025,710	1,828,920	1,848,933	2,178,027	7,881,589
SDA	92,280	113,404	81,162	70,044	356,890
DLA	4,716,279	4,214,855	4,042,525	4,388,296	17,361,955
Total	6,834,268	6,157,179	5,972,619	6,636,367	25,600,434

2002–03

£

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
INCAP	2,362,133	2,503,296	2,478,593	1,929,232	9,273,254
SDA	59,994	45,878	34,114	117,636	257,623
DLA	4,296,070	4,096,089	3,934,928	4,437,234	16,764,321
Total	6,718,198	6,645,263	6,447,635	6,484,102	26,295,198

2003–04

£

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
INCAP	3,222,761	2,626,808	2,633,379	3,047,769	11,529,997
SDA	27,950	29,165	18,228	18,228	93,572
DLA	4,289,723	4,180,353	4,067,338	4,839,002	17,376,416
Total	7,540,434	6,835,607	6,718,946	7,904,999	28,999,985

I hope this reply is helpful.

Disused Petrol Stations

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of disused petrol stations which do not meet the requirements of the Public Health Act 1961; how many improvement notices have been issued under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; and what further steps are planned to deal with the potential detrimental effects to the environment of disused petrol stations. [200914]

Jane Kennedy: The local Petroleum Licensing Authority enforces the safety of disused petrol stations. There is no statutory obligation on them to keep records of how many sites do not meet the requirements of the Public Health Act 1961. There is also no statutory obligation on them to keep records on how many improvement notices they have issued under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in relation to disused petrol stations. As such, it is not possible to provide the statistics requested.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs groundwater protection code on filling stations contains advice on decommissioning underground storage tanks, and the Environment Agency has powers to enforce the code. In general, the agency expects risks to groundwater from decommissioned tanks to be lower than from active tanks since, at worst, only residual fuel would be likely to remain. The Environment Agency's risk-based approach to groundwater protection and improvement will be taken forward under the Water Framework Directive. Local authorities also have duties under Part 11A of the Environmental Protection Act to identify contaminated land and secure remediation which may involve the Environment Agency.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make it his policy *(a)* to pool the remaining assets of pension schemes which fall within the scope of his financial assistance scheme and to *(b)* instruct such schemes not to purchase annuities with such balances; [202013]

(2) what the maximum percentage is of lost occupational pension rights that will be replaced by the Financial Assistance Scheme. [202016]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement I gave on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 64–66WS on the Financial Assistance Scheme.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to ensure that recipients of payments under the financial assistance scheme continue to receive such payments after the initial 20-year funding period has ended. [202014]

Malcolm Wicks: The timing of payments and hence the precise funding arrangements will depend on how the financial assistance is delivered. As I said in a written ministerial statement on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 64–66WS, options for delivery including a top-up pension, a cash lump sum, or purchase of an annuity at age 65, are still being considered.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on how many pension schemes he has so far successfully collected data in connection with his development of a financial assistance scheme; and what percentage this represents of all the schemes for which he is collecting data. [202015]

Malcolm Wicks: The current data collection exercise has received information from over 100 pension schemes. The exercise is not due to finish until 10 December 2004, and we expect to receive more information immediately prior to that deadline. The earlier data collection exercise received information from some 250 pension schemes. It is not possible to say what percentage this represents of all the schemes for which we are collecting data, because there is no adequate central source of data with which to identify all schemes potentially eligible for the Financial Assistance Scheme.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the full liability of the Financial Assistance Scheme for people whose occupational pension funds have collapsed. [202194]

Malcolm Wicks: The Financial Assistance Scheme has no liability in respect of people whose occupational pension funds have collapsed. Through the Financial Assistance Scheme the Government have committed £400 million to provide assistance to members of pension scheme winding up under-funded prior to the introduction of the Pension Protection Fund.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate has been made of the level of assistance to be awarded through the financial assistance scheme to each person who has lost their occupational pension funding. [202195]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement given on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, volume 428, columns 64–6WS.

IBM UK Pension Fund

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will establish an independent inquiry into the handling by the Pensions Ombudsman of the complaint by members of the IBM UK pension fund; and if he will make a statement. [200257]

Malcolm Wicks: The Pensions Ombudsman is an independent statutory Commissioner and I cannot comment on his determinations or on actions taken during his investigation of complaints. Copies of his determinations are available on the Pension's Ombudsman's websitewww.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk.

Complainants who are unhappy with the Pensions Ombudsman's determinations have the option of appealing to the High Court on a point of law. They must do this within 28 days of receiving the determination in England and Wales and 14 days in Scotland. They could also ask for the determination to be judicially reviewed, and must make an application within three months of the determination being issued.

If complainants are unhappy about the service received from the Pensions Ombudsman, an MP can refer the matter to the Parliamentary Ombudsman. She may review the way that the case was handled but will not consider formal decisions (i.e. determinations) made by the Pensions Ombudsman or his staff.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the criteria are for assessing the performance of staff of JobCentre Plus in respect of the payment of jobseeker's allowance. [201741]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Peter Ainsworth, dated 6 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the criteria for assessing the performance of Jobcentre Plus staff in respect of Jobseeker's Allowance. This is something, which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus performance is assessed against the levels set within the targets agreed annually with the Minister of State for Work. Underpinning these headline targets, we have a series of Key Management Indicators.

For Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), performance is measured against:

The percentage of cases processed accurately within a selected sample (profile 94 per cent.);

The amount of JSA lost due to fraud and error expressed as a percentage of programme spend (to be no more than 6 per cent. of Income Support and JSA combined programme spend);

The percentage of cases that cannot be regarded as fully checked within the selected sample (no more than 1 per cent. of variance from actual accuracy)

The average clearance time to process both new claims (12 days) and changes in circumstances (4 days); and

The speed with which we submit appeals against decisions on JSA to The Appeals Service (90 per cent. in 60 working days)

I hope this is helpful.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average time from claiming jobseeker's allowance and income support to receiving payment has been in *(a)* the area covered by Eston JobCentre Plus and *(b)* each of the other areas of the Redcar constituency not covered by the Eston JobCentre Plus in the last period for which figures are available; [202634]

(2) what procedure is followed in processing applications for *(a)* jobseeker's allowance and *(b)* income support in the Redcar constituency; [202672]

(3) how many financial advisers are allocated to *(a)* Eston Jobcentre Plus and *(b)* the other areas of Redcar constituency. [202675]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Vera Baird, dated 6 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the processing of claims for Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support in the Redcar constituency, and the number of financial advisers in the Redcar constituency. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Information on speed of processing is expressed as the Average Actual Clearance Time (AACT). This measures the time from when a claim to benefit is received until the processing has been completed. If a payment is due it would normally be sent to the customer on the date that processing is completed, so should be received by the customer either one or two days later.

Locally gathered information is available in different formats for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and for Income Support (IS). JSA figures can be broken down on a site by site basis, however IS is processed by one team covering the 9 Jobcentre/Jobcentre Plus service delivery sites in the Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar/Cleveland areas, referred to as the Middlesbrough Site. Figures are thus only available on that basis. Figures for Tees Valley (which includes Darlington and Hartlepool) are also available, so are included for information.

The latest AACT figures held are for October 2004 and are expressed in days, as shown in the tables.

	Days
Jobseeker's allowance	
Eston	16.6
Guisborough	12
Redcar	18.9
Loftus	18.8
Income support	
Middlesbrough Site	9.9
Tees Valley	10.2

The offices in the Redcar constituency are Eston, Redcar, Loftus and Guisborough. While Eston, Redcar and Loftus are Jobcentre Plus service delivery sites, Guisborough has yet to convert to the new integrated Jobcentre Plus service, so remains a standard Jobcentre, and, as such, processes claims to benefits in a different way.

Under Jobcentre Plus operations, a claim to JSA or IS usually starts with a telephone call to the Contact Centre. After obtaining initial details, Contact Centre staff call the customer back to obtain the necessary information to complete a claim to benefit. They also arrange an appointment for the customer to attend their local office to see both a Financial Assessor (FA) and a Personal Adviser (PA).

During this face-to-face interview, the FA obtains the information from the customer that is needed to process the claim to benefit. The FA also initiates requests for other information, which may also be needed to determine the benefit position, for example, details of final payments from an employer. Once all the information has been obtained, the FA produces a document, which is sent by courier to the central processing site where the benefit processing officers make the final determination and process the claim.

In Guisborough the pre-Jobcentre Plus process is in operation, and customers wanting to claim JSA usually contact a Customer Call Centre in order to make an appointment with a Personal Adviser in their local office. Benefit Processing Officers in the local office take all action to gather information and process some claims. Any they cannot deal with are sent to the central processing site for final determination and processing. Customers wanting to make a claim to IS do so by post and send their claim form directly into the processing site. For IS there is no requirement for an interview with an FA or PA.

Jobcentre Plus service delivery sites have Financial Assessors and Personal Advisers. The number of Financial Assessors in the offices in the Redcar constituency are in the table.

	Number of financial advisers
Eston	3.5
Redcar	5.18
Loftus	2
Guisborough	2 (Benefit Processing Officers)

I hope this is helpful.

National Insurance

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 43–4W, on contracted-out rebates, what his assumptions are of the number of people who are contracted out in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [201933]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the table:

Million

Type of Scheme	*Number of people contracted out in 2004–05*
Contracted-out Salary Related Scheme	7.0
Contracted-out Money Purchase Scheme Contracted-out Mixed Benefit Scheme	0.6
Appropriate Personal Pension Scheme	3.3
Total	[1]11.0

[1] Numbers do not sum to total due to rounding to the nearest hundred thousand

Note:

1. The estimates are based on the numbers contracted-out in 2000–01, the latest year for which information is available; they are for Great Britain and are consistent with those used by the Government Actuary to estimate the cost of the rebate for the 2004 pre-Budget report.
2. The numbers are based on those shown in the departmental publication "Second- Tier Pension Provision" published in March 2004 but exclude:
(a) data for Northern Ireland as estimates for the pre-Budget report are based on Great Britain only; and
(b) people earning below the lower earnings limit.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether immigrants to the UK are entitled to be issued with national insurance numbers if they *(a)* have entered the UK on false passports, *(b)* have had their applications under the regularisation of overstayers scheme refused with no right of appeal and *(c)* have had their applications under the Home Office's marriage policy refused. [201810]

Mr. Pond: Possession of a national insurance number (NINO) does not constitute proof of the right to work, and the onus for establishing right to work rests with employers. The 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act prohibits the use of illegal migrant labour and requires employers to carry out certain specified document checks on prospective employees. The NINO is only acceptable as evidence of entitlement to work if produced in combination with other specified documents. Alternatively, job applicants can demonstrate their entitlement to work by producing specified secure documentation, such as the British passport, EEA passports and other foreign passports endorsed to show the holder can work in the UK.

The allocation of NINOs to adults affects almost exclusively people entering the UK from abroad. People who have entered the UK on false passports; have had their applications under the regularisation of overstayers scheme refused with no right of appeal; and have had their applications under the Home Office's marriage policy refused, but have met the criteria for a NINO to be allocated, would be issued with a NINO.

We have well established processes in place to notify the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate where it becomes apparent that an individual requesting a NINO has immigration restrictions. This process protects the benefit systems from undue loss when a person's immigration status excludes the right to access public funds and provides the Immigration Service with up to date information on the individual.

Pensions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will strengthen the powers of the pensions ombudsman to take action against providers of pension schemes when he finds evidence of malpractice or poor service; and if he will make a statement. [202751]

Malcolm Wicks: The pensions ombudsman is an independent statutory commissioner. His powers are quite wide ranging. He can investigate complaints of injustice caused by maladministration and disputes of fact or law brought by members of occupational pension schemes, and their spouses and dependants, against trustees, managers or administrators of those schemes or employers. He may direct any person responsible for the management of the scheme to take or refrain from taking such steps as are specified in his determination. His determination is final and binding and is enforceable in a county court as if it was a judgement or order of the court.

The pensions ombudsman can also investigate complaints of injustice from members of personal pension schemes, who have suffered as a result of maladministration carried out by people responsible for provision in the scheme's administration.

The Pensions Act 2004 further strengthens the pensions ombudsman's powers by ensuring that where the management or administration of the scheme is outsourced, those with such responsibility should be subject to the pensions ombudsman's jurisdiction. This provision will come into force shortly.

This will enable him to deal with complaints or disputes relating to "one off" acts of administration. An example of this would be an insurance company carrying out a single act, e.g. calculating a transfer value for an insurance policy.

Social Fund

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many full-time staff equivalents have worked on the administration of the Social Fund for Edinburgh, Lothians and the Borders district in each of the last five years; what the ratio of staff to relevant potential claimants was in each of the last five years; and what the ratio of staff to claims was in each of the last five years;. [199577]

(2) how many telephone lines there are at Bathgate to receive calls about Social Fund crisis loans; what the average length of time taken to answer a call is; how many and what percentage of calls were abandoned by the caller in the last period for which figures are available; and how many calls a day on average were received in the last period for which figures are available;. [199579]

(3) how many complaints have been received about the administration of the Social Fund in Edinburgh, Lothians and the Borders in each of the last five years. [199580]

(4) whether the telephony system used for the administration of the Social Fund is part of the Customer Management Services IT project; how many *(a)* errors and *(b)* change requests have been reported to the supplier of the system; what criticisms have been made to the supplier about the telephony system; what changes have been made to improve the telephony system; whether payments for the telephony system have been withheld; and if he will make a statement. [199582]

Mr. Pond: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Sir Archy Kirkwood, dated 6 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the Social Fund delivery in Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Jobcentre Plus district. This is something, which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It may be helpful if I first explain that Jobcentre Plus Direct uses an advanced call centre telephony system to support the customer services delivered by Jobcentre Plus Direct Contact Centres. These services, which include first customer contact in making claims for working age benefits, do not include the administration of the Social Fund. The administration of the Social Fund is currently delivered from within the district field network, using standard telephony, which is available in almost all Jobcentre Plus local offices. The telephony used to deliver the Social Fund is not part of the Customer Management System IT project.

I am in a position to provide the statistical information you request only for the periods 2003–04 and 2004–05. This is partly because of the district restructuring which occurred in April 2004 and merged the former separate Edinburgh and Lothian and Borders districts and makes earlier data comparison invalid, and also our staff information database which would have confirmed staffing levels only came into operation in April 2003.

By way of background, Crisis Loan applications by telephone was introduced in Bathgate Jobcentre Plus office on 18 November 2002 and subsequently rolled out to the remainder of the old Lothian and Borders district by August 2004. In what is now the new restructured district, crisis loan applications by telephone have been in operation for approximately one year.

Turning to your specific questions, firstly, during the operational year 2003–2004, 59.9 full time equivalent staff were engaged in the administration of Social Fund and this figure has been increased to 61.4 for 2004/05. I regret I am unable to estimate the potential number of Social Fund customers, this is because applications are open to non-Jobcentre Plus customers. However, the actual number of Social Fund Claims received claims received in 2003–04 was 89278, and this year to date, we have received 52172. I am also pleased to say that additional staff are currently working on Crisis Loans in the District to help deal with this volume of activity. In terms of a staff to claims ratio, I regret that data is not available which would fully reflect all aspects of Social Fund activity, for example appeals or abortive claims. I should like to mention that Crisis Loan productivity in Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders District is the highest in Scotland, and above the Jobcentre Plus national average.

There are currently 9 telephone lines available within Bathgate Jobcentre Plus office to deal with Crisis Loan applications. The average time taken for the end to end process from the point of call receipt is between 30 to 45 minutes. Unfortunately due to the nature of the telecommunication system in place, I am not able to answer your other call-type questions.

Finally, during 2003/04, 30 formal complaints were received through our official channels. This number has fallen to 17 complaints this year to date. Unfortunately, at present, I am unable to provide figures for complaints received direct to the district. I will, however, forward this information to you as soon as it is available.

I hope this is helpful.

State Pensions (Exception Service)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what arrangements have been made to publicise the existence of an exception service for state pension payments; [201517]

(2) how a person eligible for a state pension can apply to be included in the exception scheme for its payment; [201529]

(3) what recent estimate he has made of the number of people who will use the exception service for the payment of their pension; and what estimate he has made of the cost of the service; [201530]

(4) what arrangements have been made to ensure continuity of payment to pensioners who do not respond to the request to nominate a new method of payment when the pension book is discontinued. [201531]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The cheque payment was designed in consultation with a range of customer representative groups and detailed information was circulated to them and to all hon. Members in May of this year.

Existing customers, including pensioners, who are not paid direct into an account, are being contacted to provide details of the account they would like to use to receive their payment. The current order book contract ends early in 2005. Customers who are still being paid by order book will be notified when their last book is issued.

Cheque payments will automatically be made, to those customers who we are unable to pay into an account. There is no application procedure.

The precise number of cheques will depend on customer responses. We will not know until the conversion process is completed.

Telephone Response Times

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to improve response times to the Department's free telephone number. [200218]

Mr. Pond: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. David Hamilton, dated 6 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning plans to improve response times to the Department's free telephone number. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It may be helpful if I first explain that Jobcentre Plus Direct uses an advanced call centre telephony system to support the customer services delivered by Jobcentre Plus direct contact centres. These services, which include first customer contact in making claims for working age benefits, do not include the administration of the Social Fund. The administration of the Social Fund is currently delivered from within the district field network, using standard telephony, which is available in almost all Jobcentre Plus local offices. The telephony used to deliver the Social Fund is not part of the Customer Management System IT project.

By way of background, Crisis Loan applications by telephone was introduced in Bathgate Jobcentre Plus office on 18 November 2002 and subsequently rolled out to the remainder of the old Lothian and Borders district by August 2004. In what is now the new restructured district, crisis loan applications by telephone have been in operation for approximately one year.

There are currently 9 telephone lines available within Bathgate Jobcentre Plus office to deal with Crisis Loan applications. The average time taken for the end to end process from the point of call receipt is between 30 to 45 minutes.

A review of this system is currently in progress which is expected to report by mid January 2005; however as an interim measure the hours of the telephone service have been extended from 9.30am to 4pm to 8.30am to 4.30pm (Monday to Friday).

BT has also been asked to evaluate the current telephone system and invited to offer suggestions for improvement.

I hope this is helpful.

TRANSPORT

A303/A358

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the detailed technical work which assessed the options of improving the A303 or the A358 to the west of Ilminster. [202161]

Mr. Jamieson: The detailed technical work is summarised in the report prepared for the South West Regional Assembly by the Highways Agency and published on the Regional Assembly website. A copy of the Report has been placed in the House Library.

A5

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are for the detrunking of the A5 through Dunstable once the A5-M1 link/Dunstable and Hongleton Regis northern bypass is built. [200609]

Mr. Jamieson: The development of the proposed A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass) is at an early stage and responsibility for the A5 through Dunstable on completion of the bypass has not yet been agreed.

Aircraft Pollution

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the environmental consequences of production by aircraft of nitrogen oxides; and what steps he is taking to limit such emissions. [202738]

Charlotte Atkins: Evidence of climate effects from increased ozone concentrations in the atmosphere is well established and emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from aircraft are an ozone precursor. The Government have supported several research projects aimed at improving the level of scientific understanding of aircraft NOx effects and the sensitivity to where aircraft fly, most recently the collaborative EC TRADE-OFF project. Around airports, aircraft are one of many contributors to NOx concentrations. Nitrogen dioxide (NO2)—formed by NOx—is a target pollutant in the UK Air Quality Strategy and health-based limit values become mandatory in 2010. The Government presses for technology advances and tighter standards that will reduce aircraft source emissions. A 12 per cent. tightening of the international standard for aircraft emissions of NOx for new aircraft types from 2008 was agreed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation recently. This will be incorporated into UK regulations.

Dartford/Thurrock Crossing (Toll)

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much income was received by his Department from the toll revenue from the Dartford to Thurrock river crossings in each year since the new Dartford to Thurrock crossing charging scheme came into force; [199425]

(2) how much funding local transport schemes have received via his Department from the toll revenue from the Dartford to Thurrock river crossings in each year since the new Dartford to Thurrock crossing charging scheme came into force, broken down by scheme; [199426]

(3) if he will make funding derived from the toll revenue from the Dartford to Thurrock river crossings available to local transport schemes in Kent Thameside on a permanent basis. [199427]

Mr. Jamieson: The Dartford-Thurrock Crossing charging scheme came into force on 1 April 2003. Subject to verification by the Comptroller and Auditor General, the outturn for the year ended 31 March 2004 was £69.1 million.

All income from the charging scheme is taken into account in the funding for the 10 year plan.

With regard to funding for use on local transport schemes, it is for local authorities to apply for such funding in the normal way through the Local Transport Plan process.

Driving Tests

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many drivers with a provisional licence took a driving test in the last three years for which data is available; and how many failed at the first attempt. [201619]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is as follows.

Practical car tests

Financial year	*Car tests conducted*	*Car tests pass rate*
2001–02	1,217,479	43
2002–03	1,348,190	43
2003–04	1,399,385	43
April 2004 to October 2004	[1]947,076	[1]42

[1] Provisional.

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) has not previously collated information on pass rates by attempt. The Agency started collecting this information at the beginning of the current financial year, but the data is not yet sufficiently reliable to be meaningful.

EU Directives

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [202425]

Mr. McNulty: The information is as follows:

(a) This information is not held centrally and could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

(b) Information is not held in the form requested, and could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

(c) Departments are required to produce regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) for proposals, including those originating in European legislation, likely to impose costs on business, charities or voluntary organisations. Copies of these are placed in the Library, and on departmental websites.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200175]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 10–11W, by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe.

Grantham-Skegness Branch Line

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the economic viability of the Grantham to Skegness branch line; [201979]

(2) how many passengers have travelled on the Grantham to Skegness branch line in each year since 1995. [201980]

Mr. McNulty: The Skegness line forms part of a network of rail services operated by Central Trains. Subsidy per passenger kilometre for these services in aggregate is set out in the Strategic Rail Authority's National Rail Trends (copies of which are in the House Library). Information on the number of passengers that have travelled on the Grantham to Skegness line each year since 1995 is not held centrally.

Highways Agency

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will break down the budget of the Highways Agency for 2004–05 by major category. [200641]

Mr. Jamieson: The indicative Capital and Resource budgets of the Highways Agency are identified, in total and by main categories of expenditure, in the Agency's published Business Plan for the year 2004–05, which is available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the frequency and schedule under the 30 year contract is between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Limited for contract review. [200643]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State does not have any contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Ltd. Performance of the contract is reviewed on an ongoing basis but there are no provisions for formal contract review.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what mechanisms there are under the 30 year contract between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Ltd. for cost recoveries through changes to the per vehicle charge. [200644]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State does not have a contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Ltd. The Shadow Tolls payments in the 30-year contract between the Secretary of State and UK Highways (M40) Ltd. are calculated annually and indexed to protect the contractors against inflation using the Retail Price Index as the basic factor.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what environmental terms were in the initial 30 year contract between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Ltd. [200645]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State does not have any contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Ltd. The contract required the company to incorporate into the construction work all of the environmental features included in the approved design. The attached extract from the Design, Build, Finance and Operate Contract

between the Secretary of State for Transport and UK Highways (M40) Ltd. details further general and specific environmental terms.

"Core Operation and Maintenance Requirements

In the design, planning and execution of all works and functions associated with the operation and maintenance of the Project Facilities, the DBFO Co shall take all such action and do all such things (including, without limitation, organising itself, adopting measures and standards, executing procedures, including inspection procedures and safety patrols, and engaging and managing contractors, agents and employees) as will and in such manner as will secure . . . risk of adverse effects on the environment and on the amenity enjoyed by the owners and occupiers of land adjacent to the Project Road and to adjoining roads and facilities is minimised.

Scheme Specific Core Operation and Maintenance Requirements

The DBFO Co shall cultivate and maintain the landscaped areas of the Project Road so as to enhance the appearance and aesthetic quality of the Project Road and to mitigate its adverse environmental effects.

The DBFO Co shall operate and maintain the Site and the Operation and Maintenance Adjacent Areas so as to enhance nature conservation."

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what environmental issues have been negotiated in reviews of the 30 year contract between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Ltd. [200646]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State does not have any contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Ltd. There are no provisions in the Design, Build Finance and Operate Contract between the Secretary of State for Transport and UK Highways (M40) Ltd. for any formal review of environmental issues.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the Highways Agency is able to agree additional works with contractors under the terms of its 30 year contract with Highway Services (UK) Ltd. [201822]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport does not have a contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Limited. All the Department's DBFO contracts make provision for Additional Works and other Additional Services. Where the Department through its Highways Agency proposes Additional Works to be carried out it notifies the DBFO Company of such an intention by means of an Additional Works Notice:

The Additional Works Notice includes a description and/or specification of the Additional Works.

The specification should include the time by which the proposed Additional Works are to be completed.

The Additional Works Notice should specify the Additional Works Services (if any), which the Secretary of State requires the DBFO Co. to perform in respect of the Additional Works.

The Additional Works Notice should also specify the time by which any comments from the DBFO Company on the contents of the Additional Works Notice must be received.

Road Accidents (A303/A30)

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured in road accidents on the A303/A30 between Ilminster and Honiton in each of the last seven years. [202163]

Mr. Jamieson: The numbers of people killed or seriously injured on this section of the A303/A30 for each of the last seven years are set out as follows:

	Number of fatalities	*Number of seriously injured*
1998	3	5
1999	2	12
2000	2	7
2001	2	8
2002	2	10
2003	0	10
2004 (until end September)	2	0
Total	13	52

Road Furniture

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what quantity of *(a)* street lights and *(b)* other road furniture was replaced in the last year for which figures are available; what the cost of such replacement was; and what proportion of the (i) quantity and (ii) cost of such replacement was as a result of collisions on (A) Highways Agency roads and (B) local authority roads. [202769]

Charlotte Atkins: Highway maintenance, including the upkeep of street lighting, is the responsibility of local highway authorities in respect of local roads and the Highways Agency in respect of the trunk road network. The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Wheel Loss

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the results of the wheel loss survey completed on 30 April 1997; and what steps have been taken in the light of these results. [201196]

Mr. Jamieson: Copies of the report have been placed in the House Library. Although the report was aimed primarily at assessing the size of the problem, it also indicated that a major contributing factor was lack of adequate maintenance and checking of wheel fixings. The then Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions issued a leaflet, in association with relevant stakeholders such as the Freight Transport Association, giving guidance on appropriate measures to reduce wheel loss. Copies of the leaflet are available in the Library. A further piece of research into the incidence of heavy goods vehicle wheel loss, commissioned by my Department, will report soon, and more work is under consideration for launch next year. In addition, there are a number of initiatives such as the Heavy Vehicle Accident Study in which wheel loss will form one of a variety of issues investigated.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding his Department has made available to investigate incidents of wheel loss involving heavy goods vehicles. [201200]

Mr. Jamieson: A contribution of £35,000 was made by the Department for Trade and Industry to research carried out in the late 1980s. In 1997 the then Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions prepared a report based upon surveys carried

out by the Vehicle Inspectorate and the Association of Chief Police Officers. No figures are available for this work. A new project is currently under way to update the accident statistics of wheel loss from heavy vehicles. This project is part of the present Department for Transport's wide ranging programme of research into vehicle safety which is currently valued at £7.1 million. There is not a specific sum in this budget for investigation of wheel loss incidents.

Roadworks

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which roads are being considered by the Highways Agency for treatment for non-maintenance reasons in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07. [200637]

Mr. Jamieson: It is the Government's intention to bring forward resurfacing of concrete roads ahead of maintenance need, as resources allow, as announced by the Secretary of State on 1 April 2003. The following roads are being resurfaced ahead of maintenance need in 2004–05:

A27 Chichester—Havant, Emsworth and Chichester sections.

In addition the following sections of concrete road are being resurfaced in 2004–05 for maintenance reasons:

A1(M) junction 1

A180 Harborough—Stallinborough

M69 junction 2 to M1 junction 21

A1 Carlton to Muskham phase 2.

It is too early to say which roads might be brought forward for resurfacing ahead of maintenance need in 2005–06 and 2006–07. The Highways Agency is currently developing its detailed programme following the spending review settlement.

Rolling Stock Companies

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his oral answer of 25 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 252, on the Railways Bill, if he will make a statement on the nature and purpose of the discussions under way with the rolling stock companies. [202147]

Mr. McNulty: As set out in the 'Future of Rail' White Paper, the Department for Transport is currently considering further whether and how the operation of the rolling stock market can be improved. The White Paper also said that to support this the Department would prepare a rolling stock strategy to help the industry plan more effectively.

Sheerness Port

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ensure that the Harbourmaster at Sheerness Port restricts the opening of the Kingsferry Bridge to a single lift during rush hours; and if he will make a statement. [201070]

Mr. Jamieson: Responsibility for the operation of Kingsferry Bridge is a matter for Network Rail. The Harbour Master has no authority to restrict its opening.

Slam-door Trains

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of the oldest slam-door trains have received a waiver allowing them to run beyond the statutory deadline of 31 December for removing them from the network; and when they will be replaced by new trains. [202539]

Mr. McNulty: The exemption issued by the Health and Safety Executive on 22 October does not apply to a specified number of vehicles. It says, instead, that all Mark 1 slam door trains must be removed from passenger service by November 2005. By 13 November 2004, 889 Mark 1 slam door vehicles had been withdrawn from service across the three south-of-the-Thames train operating companies, leaving another 849 available for service and covered by the exemption. We expect them all to have been removed by August 2005.

Speed Cameras

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras have been in operation in each year since 1999, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* class of road. [201195]

Mr. Jamieson: Cameras have been in use since the early 1990's. Prior to the start of the Safety Camera Programme in April 2000, there was no requirement for local authorities or Police authorities to report on the number or location of safety cameras. Since the Safety Camera Programme started in 2000, partnerships have been required to provide the information requested and the current Department for Transport database shows the data, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Stations (Crime)

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria stations need to meet to be designated secure stations under the Secure Stations scheme; and how much money has been spent advertising the scheme. [202767]

Mr. McNulty: The Secure Stations scheme is designed to improve and standardise good security practices at overground and underground stations. The scheme awards Secure Stations status to those stations that have worked with their local British Transport Police Crime Reduction Officer to reach specified standards in crime management, station design, station management, and passenger perceptions. Criteria covered include lighting, maintenance procedures, passenger information, incident reporting, and staff training.

Approximately £15,000 has been spent on the printing and distribution of the Secure Stations scheme guidance. The scheme is also "advertised" through various meetings, presentations, magazine articles, seminars and conferences with relevant interested parties. Accredited stations are also able to make their own advertising through local news features and their own publicity materials (eg posters, company magazines).

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many stations with Secure Station status have subsequently had their designation removed in

each year since the scheme's inception; and which stations have been designated secure stations under the Secure Station scheme. [202768]

Mr. McNulty: Stations are awarded Secure Stations status for a two year period once they have met the required accreditation standards on station design, station management, crime management, and passenger perceptions. There is provision for the accreditation to be withdrawn if there is a clear breach of standards during that time. No stations have breached the standards during their accreditation period.

Accredited stations can apply for reaccreditation after their two year award period has expired. As shown as follows, although a large number of stations have become reaccredited, 59 stations have not sought or achieved reaccreditation and, therefore, their accreditation status has been removed. There were two of these stations during 2000, three during 2001, 18 during 2002, 21 during 2003, and 15 during 2004.

A total of 225 stations have been accredited under the Secure Stations scheme. Of these 81 are first time accreditations, 85 have been reaccredited and 59 have lapsed. A list of accredited stations has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Approximately two thirds of all overground rail journeys and approximately one half of all London Underground journeys involve passengers starting or finishing their journeys at a Secure Station.

Transport Fuels (Renewables Obligation)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to introduce a renewables obligation for transport fuels. [202106]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government are considering whether an obligation might be an appropriate mechanism to support the introduction of renewable road fuels into the long term, but no decision has yet been taken. The pre-Budget report announced that we will undertake a feasibility study and consultative process with stakeholders to inform our judgment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter to him dated 11 October from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Pauline Clear. [201350]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 2 December. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on manning levels at the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. [200149]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority currently has some 452 staff. 328 of these are employees of the Scottish Executive on special assignment to the Authority in its Glasgow office: 124 are employees of the Home Office on secondment to the Authority in its London office.

Drink-Driving

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will reduce the drink-drive blood alcohol limit to 50mg. [201499]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The Government have no plans at present to lower the drink-drive legal limit.

We feel that it would be more effective to maintain our emphasis on enforcement and education through publicity. This approach, backed by strong penalties which are among the toughest in Europe, has led to a significant reduction in drink-drive fatalities since the 1970s and given this country one of the best overall road safety records in the EU.

We are taking further steps to deal with drink driving in the new Road Safety Bill.

Fines

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to link the level of a fine to a defendant's income. [201017]

Paul Goggins: Fines are currently imposed on the basis of the seriousness of the offence and the offender's ability to pay. The Government have accepted the recommendation made in the Carter Report, "Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime", that a "day fines" system should be introduced. This would offer a more transparent link with ability to pay so that fines should bear more equally on offenders of differing means.

Gateway Zero Reviews

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice his Department has received from the Office of Government Commerce on the timing of Gateway Zero reviews. [200011]

Paul Goggins: The Office of Government Commerce was fully consulted and the time scale of the Gateway Zero review was agreed with them.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what risk assessment has been carried out on co-ordination and integration across the sub-programmes of the National Offender Management Service; [199787]

(2) what risk assessment has been carried out on the scale and scope of the change programme of the National Offender Management Service. [199786]

Paul Goggins: As part of the setting up of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), a comprehensive risk management strategy has been established, providing for the assessment, monitoring and managing of risks across the Change Programme. Risk assessments have been carried out at detail and strategic level across the

Programme. The results have been agreed with the NOMS Directors and reported to the NOMS Board and to other governance bodies within the Home Office.

The assessments cover all aspects of the Programme, including policy, implementation, people and process issues. The result of any risk assessment is a risk register, which contains not only the risk, with scores for probability and impact, but importantly the counter measures which have been identified to mitigate the risks. The registers are continually updated as the Programme evolves and the risks change.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training staff will receive in respect of the National Offender Monitoring Information Project. [199984]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Information System (NOMIS) Project formally started on 1 June 2004. The first phase is a 12 month detailed design and pilot which covers the business changes necessary to implement new IT support facilities for the prisons and probation services. This will enable them to meet the new sentencing provisions under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Targeted training is a vital component of the programme and a training strategy and plan for all potential users of NOMIS will be one of the key outputs of this phase.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the National Offender Management Service business case will be published. [199993]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Manager Service detailed business case is currently being prepared. In keeping with normal practice across the Government it is not intended to publish the results.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a business case existed prior to the announcement of the National Offender Management Service in January. [199995]

Paul Goggins: The case for establishment of the National Offender Management Service was outlined in Patrick Carter's independent report "Managing Offenders-Reducing Crime".

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who was consulted and what advice his Department has received on the preparation of the business case for the National Offender Management Service. [199996]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service business case is being prepared according to the Home Office standards and the experience gained from preparing business cases for other Change Programmes.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the terms of reference are for the National Offender Management Information Project. [199997]

Paul Goggins: The terms of reference for the National Offender Management Information Project are: to design a shared offender database as recommended in the Carter Review "Managing Offenders and Reducing Crime"; to develop IT functionality in order to meet the specific operational needs of the Prisons and Probation Services; and to support interfaces to other criminal justice organisations such as the police and courts, as part of a more joined up approach to reducing re-offending.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civil servants are employed on the National Offender Management Information Project, broken down by grade. [200001]

Paul Goggins: From the Prison Service, there are currently 17 civil servants directly engaged on the National Offender Management Information System Project working alongside suppliers. These comprise one senior civil servant (Project Director), one senior manager B (G6 equivalent), two senior manager D (G7 equivalent), four manager E (SEO equivalent), three manager G/F (HEO equivalent), six principal/senior officers (EO equivalent). In addition, there are seven assistant chief officers or senior probation officers engaged either on a full or part-time basis from the probation service.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated cost of the National Offender Management Information Project is for the *(a)* current financial year and *(b)* next three financial years. [200002]

Paul Goggins: The cost of the project in 2004–05 is £7.9 million. This covers expenditure on staff, supplier costs, equipment and licensing charges for the pilot phase. This phase will determine the build, implementation and support costs over the life of the project when the scope and requirements have been confirmed and the technical solution finally agreed.

National Offender Manager

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the National Offender Manager will be assuming responsibility for core National Probation Directorate functions. [199956]

Paul Goggins: No decision has yet been made on when the National Offender Manager will assume responsibility for core National Probation Directorate functions.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to whom the National Offender Manager in the National Offender Management Service will be accountable. [199957]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Manager is accountable to the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service.

New Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the sites which are under consideration for the building of new prisons; [199443]

(2) if he will publish the site evaluations of the potential new sites for prison establishments that have been carried out in the past 12 months. [199444]

Paul Goggins: The process of identifying suitable sites is still in progress. Details of the sites and evaluations cannot be disclosed for commercial reasons.

Prison Service Resettlement Survey

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the key findings were of the Prison Service's Resettlement Survey 2003; and if he will place a copy of the survey in the Library. [199530]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The survey was conducted to measure progress towards the Key Performance Target for increasing the number of prisoners having employment or training arranged on release. The Prison Service Annual Report 2003 states that the number of prisoners in the last two or three weeks of sentence who had employment, training or education (ETE) arranged was 25,906, as measured by the 2003 resettlement survey.

In addition, the report states that there were an additional number of cases counted toward the target of 28,200 which comprised:

7,086 from Jobcentre Plus data (14,173 prisoners attended a FRESHSTART interview at their local Jobcentre on release, scoring half a point each towards the target to build in incentives to this joint initiative).

Publications are placed in the Library as a matter of course. The detailed results of the 2003 resettlement survey are due for publication this financial year.

Prison Suicides

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many reports on suicides in prison have been completed by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman in the last 12 months; and when each was published. [200464]

Paul Goggins: Investigation of all deaths in custody (whether apparently self-inflicted or otherwise) became the responsibility of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman on 1 April 2004. Since that date, investigations have begun into 163 deaths in prisons, immigration detention and probation approved premises. This includes 59 apparently self-inflicted deaths in prison. Three reports into apparently self-inflicted deaths in prisons have been through all their stages and submitted to the respective Coroner. Nine reports into other deaths have also been completed and a further 10 are drafts upon which the relevant service is commenting in line with the Ombudsman's reporting procedure. To avoid prejudice, it is not anticipated that reports will be published until after the inquests are heard.

During 2003–04, the Ombudsman was commissioned to investigate three prison deaths, two of which were apparently self-inflicted. Those reports have also not been published as the inquests have yet to be held.

Prisoners (Sexual Abuse)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the percentage of the prison population who were victims of sexual abuse. [199509]

Paul Goggins: It is estimated that 10 per cent. of male prisoners and a third of female prisoners report having suffered sexual abuse at some time in their lives. This is based on figures from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons' (HMCIP) thematic reviews and an Office for National Statistics' study of psychiatric morbidity among prisoners (Singleton et al, 1999). In an HMICP thematic Inspection of Young People in Custody in October 1997, 17 per cent. of the young people interviewed admitted having suffered abuse of a violent, sexual or emotional nature.

Many factors prevent the disclosure of sexual abuse and it is the least reported of all forms of abuse. Disclosure of sexual abuse is recorded on individual records but not routinely collected. Data is recorded and analysed on the history of all forms of abuse through the Offender Assessment System.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to provide victim support-based treatment for prison inmates who were victims of sexual abuse prior to incarceration. [199510]

Paul Goggins: The steps taken to provide support-based treatment for prisoners who were sexually abused prior to imprisonment vary between prison establishments, reflecting local circumstances. Prison psychologists, for example, may be able to offer one-to-one help in some cases although any sort of psychological or therapeutic work done with victims of sexual abuse is a long process. Help may have to be limited to information and advice, or referring victims to appropriate agencies in their local communities on release. Some prison programmes, such as anger management, may address the impact of abuse indirectly. Prisoners who have a history of sexual abuse are at a greater risk of suicide or self-harm and guidance to staff on managing prisoners who self-harm has been circulated to establishments.

The Women's Team at Prison Service Headquarters is currently working with a small group of local practitioners (including prison staff and voluntary agencies) to develop Good Practice Principles so that they can achieve consistency in the standard of support offered to women prisoners who report they have suffered abuse. This work will be completed by late 2005 and will draw on a published literature review by Carol-Ann Hooper (2003), University of York on "Abuse, Interventions and Women in Prison".

Probation Hostels

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hostels run by *(a)* the probation service and *(b)* the voluntary sector are available in England and Wales, broken down by number of places. [199981]

Paul Goggins: The number of approved premises (hostels) run by the National Probation Service (NPS) is currently 88, and by the voluntary sector 12. Total number of beds (approximate as it can vary) is 1,977 for NPS and 261 for the voluntary sector.

Probation Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason the Probation Service Pay and Reward Review was not implemented in April. [199413]

Paul Goggins: The Pay and Reward Review for staff in the National Probation Service (NPS) could not be implemented in April 2004 because at that date no agreement had been reached with the trade unions. Negotiations are continuing between the employers' side of the NPS National Negotiating Council (NNC) and the trade union side about the introduction of affordable new pay and grading arrangements for the service. The discussions cover wide-ranging and complex issues and have been necessarily prolonged.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sex offenders are in sex offender treatment programmes in *(a)* overcrowded prisons and *(b)* non-overcrowded prisons. [199512]

Paul Goggins: The table sets out the 2004–05 completion targets for the Sex Offender Treatment programme (SOTP) for those prisons defined as overcrowded and uncrowded as at 31 October 2004.

	Overcrowded	*Uncrowded*
Number of prisons delivering SOTP	17	8
Total number of expected completions 2004–05	800	380

Information is not recorded on how many of those prisoners undergoing sex offender treatment are currently occupying cells designated as overcrowded.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on (i) inmate and (ii) prison staff perceptions of sex offenders and the influence of such perceptions on sex offenders' participation and completion of Sex Offender Treatment Programme. [199514]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has undertaken research into the reasons why offenders choose not to participate in the Sex Offender Treatment Programme in prison. As part of this work, the perceptions of both staff and prisoners and their influence on participation in the programme were considered. The Prison Service is implementing a strategy to address the issues identified by the research, with the aim of reducing the numbers refusing treatment.

Young Offenders

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of young offenders were *(a)* illiterate and *(b)* innumerate (i) at assessment on entry to young offenders institutions, (ii) 25 per cent. of the way through their custodial sentence, (iii) 50 per cent. of the way through their custodial sentence, (iv) 75 per cent. of the way through their custodial sentence and (v) on completion of their custodial sentence in the latest year for which statistics are available. [200261]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* For the period April 2002 to March 2003 the results of the basic skills assessment screening tests at male young offender establishments were as follows:

2002–03: Young offender establishments

	Number tested	*Percentage*		
		Below level 1	*At level 1*	*Above level 1*
Spelling	14,742	47.9	38.8	13.3
Punctuation	14,233	60.2	31.1	8.7
Reading	17,721	38.7	28.5	32.8
Numeracy	18,442	46.4	31.7	21.9

Information regarding progression relative to the proportion of sentence served is not available; however, the number of achievements gained by juvenile and young offenders for the same period is as follows:

	Number
Entry Level	2,227
Level 1	2,673
Level 2	1,326
Total	6,226

For the period April 2004 to August 2004 information on the basic skills level at induction is available for juveniles only and is as follows:

April to August 2004

Percentage

	Juvenile only					
	Pre-Entry	*Entry 1*	*Entry 2*	*Entry 3*	*Level 1*	*Level 1 +*
Female						
Literacy	1	9	14	34	31	11
Numeracy	13	2	29	37	18	2
Male						
Literacy	5	5	20	39	24	8
Numeracy	4	6	26	41	19	2

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Citizens Killed Abroad

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what financial assistance his Department provides to families of British citizens killed abroad to assist with *(a)* legal and *(b)* other costs. [201744]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not usually provide financial assistance for legal costs or other expenses incurred by the families of British nationals killed abroad.

As part of our assistance to victims of terrorism, we can in certain circumstances—eg if the victim's employer, insurance company or others cannot do so—offer practical support to victims of terrorism and their families.

Where a legal case overseas raises issues of human rights or due process, the FCO will consider referring the case to a member of the UK based FCO Pro Bono

Lawyers Panel. In such cases, an appointed Panel member would be expected to work alongside a lawyer retained and instructed locally by the family.

Cyprus

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to warn UK nationals of possible legal challenges to purchases of properties in the northern part of the island of Cyprus; and what his Department's policy is on *(a)* the ownership of properties constructed on illegally occupied land in the northern part of the island of Cyprus and *(b)* compensation to be paid in respect of such properties. [202794]

Mr. MacShane: The Cyprus travel advice on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website: www.fco.gov.uk has very clear language on purchasing property in the north of Cyprus. We strongly advise anyone considering buying property to seek independent qualified legal advice. We also draw attention to the political situation in Cyprus. The same advice is given to those who telephone the FCO or the British High Commission.

The UN Secretary General's comprehensive settlement plan contained provisions for the return of property and compensation in respect of properties. We continue to believe that the best way of resolving these property issues is as part of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement on the basis of the UN Secretary General's plan.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will *(a)* obtain from the British High Commission in Nicosia and *(b)* place in the Library the names and addresses of British companies engaged in the construction or marketing of properties in the occupied territory of Northern Cyprus. [202795]

Mr. MacShane: The British High Commission in Nicosia does not hold records of UK companies active in Cyprus. In line with our consular policy worldwide, we encourage all British citizens living overseas to register with their local Embassy, Consulate or High Commission. But this register does not include details of business activities.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department will take steps to ensure that UK companies are not engaged in the construction or marketing of properties on land in the northern part of Cyprus legally owned by Greek Cypriots and mis-appropriated. [202796]

Mr. MacShane: We strongly advise all those considering purchasing property in northern Cyprus to seek independent qualified legal advice before making any purchase—this is clearly stated in the Cyprus travel advice on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk. This advice applies equally to individuals and to UK companies. However, the UK Government is not in a position to intervene with or prevent UK companies from making commercial transactions with individuals or companies in northern Cyprus.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many departmental mobile telephones were used by *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202757]

Mr. Rammell: There are currently a total of 65 mobile phones in use by Ministers, Special Advisers and civil servants in ministerial offices. Records held are cumulative and reflect live numbers only, and they do not contain a summary of costs per mobile phone used. Information on charges could, therefore, be provided only at disproportionate cost. Details of old phones disconnected or replaced are not kept and it is not therefore possible to provide a breakdown for previous years.

The cost for mobile phone services, in UK, up until 2003 was based on line rental with new or replacement handsets provided to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office free of charge. While suppliers are now charging for handsets, there are no records held centrally detailing those that were lost or stolen, and the resultant cost to replace them.

Drugs (Central Asia)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the Government have contributed to the Central Asian Drugs Action Plan in each of the last three years; and what benefits to the UK have resulted. [200030]

Mr. Rammell: In addition to assistance to Afghanistan and contributions to the European Commission's assistance programmes in the region, the UK has spent approximately £1 million on counter narcotics activities in Central Asia since 2002. We have plans to increase the level of support and assistance provided. Increasing counter narcotics capacity on the borders of Afghanistan helps reduce the incentive to cultivate opiates in Afghanistan and improves the effectiveness of law enforcement activity aimed at reducing the flow of opiates to Europe and the UK.

Equatorial Guinea

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* officials from his Department have had with their French counterparts concerning external threats to Equatorial Guinea since January 2003; [199866]

(2) what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* officials from his Department have had with (i) Spanish and (ii) Nigerian counterparts concerning external threats to Equatorial Guinea since January 2003. [199869]

Mr. Straw: We do not comment on confidential diplomatic exchanges under exemptions 1*(b)* and 1*(c)* of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* the security services and *(b)* a UK police force is conducting an investigation into the Equatorial Guinea attempted coup. [199912]

Mr. Straw: It is the policy of successive Governments not to comment on the activities of the security services. The security and intelligence agencies are outside the scope of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Part 1, paragraph 6). The Equatorial Guinean authorities have passed documents relating to the alleged coup attempt in March 2004 to the Metropolitan Police, who are assessing the material.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials received information from US (i) counterparts and (ii) security agencies concerning attempted coups in Equatorial Guinea during the last 18 months. [201705]

Mr. Straw: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to my written statement of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 37–39WS. Under exemption 1 *(c)* of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, I am not prepared to comment on the detail of confidential exchanges between governments.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what dates within the last 18 months *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the security services received information, including electronic information, concerning attempted coups in Equatorial Guinea. [201706]

Mr. Straw: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to my written statement of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 37–39WS.

External Trade Commissioner

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to press for a review of the European Commissioner for External Trade's mandate with a view to increasing democratic accountability. [200032]

Mr. MacShane: There are no plans to press for a review of the EU Trade Commissioner's mandate. There is already significant democratic accountability. In trade negotiations, the Commissioner works within the terms of a mandate set by member states and reports to the Council of Ministers on a regular basis.

At his hearing before the European Parliament on 4 November, Mr. Mandelson, the Trade Commissioner designate, stated that he would continue the practice established by his predecessor, Pascal Lamy, of going beyond his legal obligations when informing the European Parliament on trade issues. We welcome that as we do the recent establishment of a European Parliamentary Committee on International Trade.

As with the other Commissioners, democratically elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) questioned Mr. Mandleson before voting to approve the new Commission as a whole. The European Parliament voted with a large majority to approve the new European Commission on 18 November.

In addition, throughout the Commission's term of office, it is subject to the scrutiny of the European Parliament, which examines reports sent to it by the Commission. Moreover, Commissioners are obliged to answer written and oral questions tabled by MEPs.

Falluja

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* embedded and *(b)* independent journalists were permitted access by the interim Iraqi Government to the Fallujah general hospital from 7 November following its capture by the Iraqi security forces. [199695]

Mr. Rammell: We are unaware of any restrictions placed on journalists entering Fallujah general hospital from 7 November.

Guantanamo Bay

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* British nationals and *(b)* former British residents are detained by the US Administration in Guantanamo Bay; where each was first taken into custody by US forces; how long each has been detained; what steps have been taken to obtain visitation rights for detainees' families; and how many letters each has been allowed to send in the last 12 months. [199615]

Mr. Mullin: There are four british nationals detained by the US at Guantanamo Bay, Feroz Abbasi, Moazzam Begg, Richard Belmar and Martin Mubanga. We are aware of five former British residents also in detention there but the Government is not in a position to provide consular or diplomatic assistance to them and I therefore cannot comment on their situation.

The four British detainees in Guantanamo Bay and their places and length of detention are:

Feroz Abbasi: Detained in Afghanistan. Transferred to Guantanamo Bay in January 2002.

Moazzam Begg: Detained in Pakistan. Transferred to Guantanamo Bay in February 2003.

Richard Belmar: Detained in Pakistan. Transferred to Guantanamo Bay in October 2002.

Martin Mubanga: Detained in Zambia. Transferred to Guantanamo Bay in April 2002.

We know from our frequent contact with the US authorities on the situation of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay that family visits are not permitted to those detainees not currently proceeding through the Military Commissions process. We have, however, made a request for Azmat Begg (Moazzam Begg's father), Dr. James MacKeith and Lord Rea to visit Moazzam Begg for the purpose of carrying out an independent psychiatric assessment. We await the US response.

We do not know how many letters each British detainee has written in the last 12 months. However, we are unaware of any limits on the number of letters detainees are permitted to write.

Hamas

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the Answer of

1 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 174–75W, on Hamas, if he will list the Governments and other parties on the ground which conveyed soundings and impressions between the EU High Representative and Hamas stating in each case whether they acted at the specific request of *(a)* the High Representative and *(b)* his officials; and under what authority these requests were made. [202787]

Mr. Rammell: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Iran

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether during recent discussions with the Government of Iran on its compliance with obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iranian Government representatives raised the United Kingdom's obligations under Article 6 of the Treaty. [199663]

Mr. MacShane: No.

Iraq

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will request that the Iraqi Ministry of Health furnish him with the *(a)* name, *(b)* location and *(c)* type of hospitals referred to in the paragraph Casualty Estimates in his written Ministerial Statement of 17 November, on Iraq: Casualty Estimates. [199844]

Mr. Rammell: We have requested this information from the Iraqi Ministry of Health. However it will take time for the information to be obtained, translated and compiled. Once compiled I will write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the list in the Library of the House.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will request that the Iraqi Ministry of Health furnish him with a breakdown of the number of civilians killed and injured, as referred to in his Written Ministerial Statement of 17 November, on Iraq: Casualty Estimates, by *(a)* age, *(b)* gender, *(c)* type of injury and *(d)* cause of death. [199845]

Mr. Rammell: The Iraqi Ministry of Health statistics on casualties do not include details of age. We have asked the Ministry of Health for a breakdown of their casualty statistics by child/adult categories as well as by gender. I will provide my hon. Friend with this compiled information and will place a copy in the Library of the House, if and when it is made available by the Ministry of Health. I understand that the Ministry of Health does not hold any further information centrally about types of injury or the precise cause of death (i.e. other than by military or terrorist action).

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what percentage of the Iraqi population are classified as Christians; and how many Christian organisations from outside Iraq are working within Iraq. [201473]

Mr. Rammell: Estimates of the number of Iraqi Christians vary. The commonly held view is that they make up around 3 per cent. of the Iraqi population. However, an accurate estimate will have to await a new Iraqi census. As far as we are aware, a small number of international organisations with a Christian affiliation have been involved in humanitarian work and promoting inter-faith dialogue in Iraq. There are also some long-standing links between Christian communities in Iraq and those in other countries.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the treatment of Christians in Iraq; and what steps the Iraqi authorities are taking to ensure their safety. [201474]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my honourable Friend to the reply I gave to my honourable Friend, the Member for Pendle (Mr. Gordon Prentice) on 17 November 2004 (*Official Report*, column 1552W).

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201551]

Mr. Straw: Seven. Of the seven, two were tabled in October 2004. Five were tabled in November 2004.

Thailand

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the establishment of staff at the British Embassy in Thailand is; how many posts are filled; and how many staff are involved in assisting British tourists needing assistance in Thailand. [201742]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office currently has 27 UK based and 108 locally engaged staff at our Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. The section primarily responsible for providing assistance to British nationals comprises one UK based officer and three local staff, one of whom is part-time. The section is supervised by the Consul. The Ambassador and Deputy Head of Mission also spend some of their time on consular policy matters.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions British Embassy staff in Thailand have had with the *(a)* Prime Minister, *(b)* Foreign Minister, *(c)* Chief Prosecutor and *(d)* Chief of Police of Thailand in relation to the killing of Vanessa Arscott of Ashburton. [201743]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister raised the killings of Vanessa Arscott and Adam Lloyd with the Thai Prime Minister on 7 October. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence (Lord Bach) raised the case with the Thai Foreign Minister on 1 October and our Ambassador to Thailand also raised it with him on 11 November. Our Ambassador also raised the case with the Thai Police Commissioner on 16 November. Our Consul sought clarification on a number of issues associated with the case with the Chief Prosecutor on 25 November. Embassy staff have also had numerous discussions regarding the case with a wide range of

police officers and officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Attorney General's Office.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will appoint a specific member of staff in the British Embassy in Thailand to deal with the Vanessa Arscott case. [201745]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him today by my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Douglas Alexander) (UIN 201742). Our Embassy in Bangkok has a team of UK and locally engaged staff working on this and other consular cases. Our Consul, reporting to the Ambassador and Deputy Head of Mission, is responsible for the specific deployment of their staff.

Ukraine

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the Ukrainian election result on the wider region. [201863]

Mr. MacShane: The Governments and peoples of Ukraine's neighbours will undoubtedly be watching the Ukrainian election closely. However, while events are still evolving, and in the absence of an agreed outcome, it is too early to make an overall assessment of the implications.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the legitimacy of the Ukrainian election result. [201864]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made to the House on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 359 by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the Government, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the EU regarding the Ukrainian election result. [201865]

Mr. MacShane: On 22 November, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation for Europe's (OSCE) International Election Observation Mission to Ukraine issued its preliminary findings and conclusions on the Ukrainian Election result. The UK with EU partners continues to discuss the election result, and the OSCE's future role in Ukraine, within the OSCE. The UK expects further discussion on Ukraine at the OSCE Ministerial Council on 6 and 7 December in Sofia.

Zimbabwe (UN Resolution)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made with the United Kingdom sponsored resolution on Zimbabwe in the United Nations; and in which institution of the United Nations it is being tabled. [201123]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* Prompted by the UK, the EU tabled a resolution on Zimbabwe at the General Assembly's Third Committee, which covers human rights. It fell on 24 November to a "no action" motion tabled by the African Group. Following the result of the vote my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Bill Rammell) and our international partners, the EU, USA and Australia, issued statements condemning this block on a proper UN debate on the serious human rights situation in Zimbabwe.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 7 December 2004

DEFENCE

Astute Class Submarines

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which submarines are to be replaced by the three Astute class submarines on order; and what their planned dates for decommissioning are. [201633]

Mr. Ingram: We are not directly replacing our existing nuclear attack submarines platform by platform. The capability currently provided by the Swiftsure and Trafalgar classes will in future be met by the Astute Class.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he expects HMS Astute to become fully operational. [201632]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Astute is expected to become fully operational in 2009 after a period of extensive weapon system proving trials. The Submarine will be available to the Fleet for limited operations before these trials complete.

Budget Reductions

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the proposed reductions in budgets of *(a)* Commander-in-Chief Fleet, *(b)* Commander-in-Chief Land Command, *(c)* Commander-in-Chief Strike Command and *(d)* Chief of Defence Logistics will have on frontline capability; and if he will make a statement. [203281]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 338–39W.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [200798]

Mr. Caplin: The information required to answer this question is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Future Rapid Effects System

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what time scale has been written into the contract with Atkins for the systems house role for the Future Rapid Effects System. [200016]

Mr. Ingram: The Systems House, under the strategic direction of the Ministry of Defence, will be leading the programme of studies during the Assessment Phase designed to inform MOD's future investment decisions on Future Rapid Effect System. The Assessment Phase is scheduled to last for two years and will complete in November 2006. The contract with Atkins reflects this time line.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the new family of medium vehicles will be operational. [200019]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Rapid Effect System (FRES) is now in its initial Assessment Phase. A contract has now been awarded to Atkins who, under the strategic direction of the Ministry of Defence, will be leading a number of key activities designed to inform MOD's major programme decisions. Part of this Assessment Phase work will be to identify and reduce risk in the programme to enable us to define an appropriate In-Service Date (ISD) in both capability and programme terms for endorsement at Main Gate. The ISD will not be formally endorsed until then, but our initial planning assumption is to introduce the early variants of FRES around the end of the decade, with a phased approach to achieving full operational capability thereafter.

Iraq

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what training Army units deploying to Iraq receive *(a)* before deployment and *(b)* in-theatre in Iraq. [199568]

Mr. Ingram: British armed forces deploying to Iraq receive one of two comprehensive pre-deployment training packages, covering a wide variety of mandatory briefings, skills training and theatre acclimatisation, dependent upon whether they are deployed on an individual basis or as part of a group deployment. Once in theatre they receive refresher and specific-to-theatre training designed to prepare them for their respective jobs, and allow them to be deployed acclimatised, and trained in the tasks that they are to perform.

Military Operations (EU)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what large scale co-operative exercises organised by EU Military Staff he expects will take place in the next five years; and from what budgets UK participation will be funded. [200380]

Mr. Hoon: The EU Military Staff currently have no plans for a large-scale co-operative exercise involving the field deployment of troops. However, EU and/or joint EU-NATO crisis management exercises, involving command structures and headquarters, are envisaged in each of the years 2006 to 2009, and will involve exercising arrangements for the augmentation of the relevant HQ. They will focus on how the EU responds to crises using both civilian and military instruments in an EU-led operation.

The majority of costs for EU exercises are funded on a "costs lie where they fall" basis. In practice, therefore, the cost to the UK of hosting an exercise would be met by the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), as it was for this year's exercise; and the cost of providing staff for an exercise hosted by another member state would be met by the Top Level Budget Holder providing the staff.

There are also a few additional costs, such as costs incurred by EU recourse to NATO common assets, that are shared by member states on a Gross National Income key. This is the same approach as for other exercises involving comparable international institutions.

Type 45 Destroyers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many type-45s will be capable of deploying simultaneously when they are all in-service. [201641]

Mr. Ingram: With eight Type 45 destroyers in service, a minimum of five units would be available to the Fleet, at various states of readiness, for deployment.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bees

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what consultation she *(a)* has had and *(b)* proposes to have with the Harrogate and Ripon Beekeepers Association regarding the Bee Health Programme. [200428]

Alun Michael: My officials are consulting the national beekeeping associations in England about our future plans for the bee health programme. These associations include the British Beekeepers' Association, of which the Harrogate and Ripon Beekeepers' Association is a member.

Civil Servants

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many civil servants worked for her Department in each of the last five years. [201129]

Alun Michael: Defra was created in June 2001 and the figures shown in the following table relate to the period since then.

	Defra	*Executive agencies*	*Total*
1 October 2001	7,970	2,520	10,490
1 April 2002	6,980	5,580	12,560
1 April 2003	6,690	5,630	12,320
1 April 2004	6,910	6,070	12,980

Numbers shown are permanent staff in full-time equivalents.

These changes were mainly due to the creation of the Rural Payments Agency on 16 October 2001. RPA took over all 1,080 staff from the Intervention Board Executive Agency (which has not been included in Defra staff in post statistics) and around 1,860 staff from the core Department.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in her Department to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202359]

Alun Michael: The Department's target time for answering such letters is 15 working days.

Deer Management Options Report

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the report Current and Future Deer Management Options, published in December 2003. [202034]

Mr Bradshaw: I asked my officials to assess the report and they found it to be excellent.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if she will make a statement. [199628]

Alun Michael: The quality and accessibility is not as high as I would like but it is our policy that our websites should comply fully with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative's guidelines (as detailed in the Guidelines for UK Government websites). I am told that our current website designs are intended to meet in full the Priority 1 (level A) standards. Work is now being undertaken to update older content on our website that may not meet current standards in full, while further work on both technical and authoring issues is intended to raise our standards.

GM Crops

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress she has made on establishing coexistence measures for the growing of GM crops. [201269]

Mr. Morley: In collaboration with the Devolved Administrations we held a series of stakeholder workshops between August and October. We are now developing a package of specific proposals and options for general consultation. Our original aim was to publish the written consultation package this year, but as there are aspects we need to explore further it will not now be issued until 2005. We plan to have co-existence measures in place before there is any commercial GM cultivation in the UK. This is not expected before 2008 at the earliest.

Hunting

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of the Hunting Act 2004 upon those whose livelihoods are *(a)* directly and *(b)* indirectly dependent on hunting; and if she will review the commencement date for the hunting ban to take account of the Minister for Rural Affairs' expressed concerns about the potential impact of implementation in February 2005. [200730]

Alun Michael: The Government do not expect that significant numbers of people will find themselves out of work as a result of the Act and many will be able to divert into other activities. Lord Burns estimated that around 700 jobs were directly dependent on hunting and that, overall, between 6,000 and 8,000 jobs could be affected by a ban, although evidence given to the Portcullis House hearings suggested that this may be an overstatement. The Government have not made any further assessment of the economic impact of the Act.

The Government believe that a longer implementation time would have helped businesses and individuals to prepare for the ban. Our proposal to defer commencement until July 2006 was, regrettably and perversely, rejected by the House of Lords.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many written questions for her Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201550]

Alun Michael: I can confirm that we did not have any written questions unanswered when Parliament prorogued.

Four parliamentary questions had not been responded to with a substantive answer when the House prorogued. Each received a response promising to write to the MP with a reply. All four questions were tabled in November 2004.

Sugar

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the European Commission about the development of an action plan for ACP sugar producers as envisaged in the EC Communication on sugar published in July. [200241]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has stressed the importance of the early delivery of a credible and effective action plan to provide appropriate adjustment aid for existing preferential sugar suppliers in the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries throughout discussion of the European Commission's Communication on sugar reform. As already reported to the House, she welcomed the commitment given by the Commission at the November meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council to bring forward a draft by the end of the year.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations her Department has made to the European Commission on the *(a)* delivery, *(b)* timing and *(c)* package of measures for ACP sugar producers in the Caribbean. [200242]

Alun Michael: Officials from both the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and from the Department for International Development have participated in a number of meetings with the European Commission on these issues. They have stressed the priority the UK attaches to the early delivery of a credible and effective action plan to provide appropriate adjustment aid for existing preferential sugar suppliers in the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries. They have also offered to share with the Commission the results of three pieces of independent research we have commissioned to help analyse the impacts of reform and determine how to address them. We hope these studies will contribute to discussions between the Commission and the countries concerned and help to ensure that the adjustment process is properly managed.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [200766]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) My colleagues and I aim to reply to letters from hon. Members within 15 working days unless the correspondence relates to Her Majesty's Prison Service or immigration and nationality matters when we aim to reply within 20 working days.

(b) Officials aim to reply to letters and e-mails from members of the public within 20 working days.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the objectives are of the National Offender Management Information Project. [200000]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Information Project will provide the National Offender Management Service with a centralised offender database. This will help to achieve its central aim of reducing re-offending, as well as support new sentencing provisions, replace aged IT systems in Prisons and Probation, and contribute to better communication and co-operation with other Criminal Justice Organisations.

New Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what dates in the last 12 months he has met right hon. and hon. Members to discuss potential sites for the building of new prison establishments; and which right hon. and hon. Members attended each meeting. [199445]

Paul Goggins: I met with the hon. Member for Elmet (Colin Burgon) to discuss the possible development of a site for a new prison on 18 November 2004.

Prisons (Fires)

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fires there were in Her Majesty's prisons from 1 January to the end of October, broken down by prison; and whether *(a)* prison staff and *(b)* prisoners were hurt. [199789]

Paul Goggins: There have been 919 fires in Her Majesty's prisons from 1 January to 31 October 2004. A breakdown by establishment is provided in the table.

Fires in prisons from 1 January 2004 to 31 October 2004

Establishment	*Total*
Acklington	6
Altcourse	5
Ashfield	27
Ashwell	6
Aylesbury	3
Bedford	6
Belmarsh	8
Birmingham	13
Blakenhurst	17
Blundeston	8
Brinsford	3
Bristol	9
Brixton	15
Brockhill	1
Bronzefield	3
Buckley Hall	9
Bullingdon	5
Bullwood Hall	6
Camphill	22
Canterbury	1
Cardiff	7
Castington	12
Channings Wood	1
Chelmsford	18
Deerbolt	2
Doncaster	9
Dorchester	1
Dovegate	15
Dover	1
Downview	5
Durham	21
Frankland	7
Full Sutton	18
Garth	1
Glen Parva	6
Gloucester	5
Grendon	1
Haslar	2
Highdown	20
Highpoint	5
Hindley	11
Holloway	11
Holme House	5
Hull	12
Huntercombe	2
Lancaster Farms	2
Latchmere House	1
Leeds	5
Leicester	9
Lewes	15
Leyhill	2
Lincoln	12
Lindholme	11
Littlehey	5
Liverpool	15
Long Lartin	1
Newton	10
Maidstone	1
Manchester	12
Moorland	3
Morton Hall	2
New Hall	15
Reading	1
Risley	13
Rochester	2
Rye Hill	14
Send	1
Stafford	5
Standford Hill	1
Stocken	3
Stoke Heath	5
Styal	14
Sudbury	2
Swaleside	15
Swansea	3
Swinfen Hall	5
The Mount	2
The Verne	7
Usk	1
Wakefield	5
Wandsworth	20
Wayland	15
Wealstun	2
Weare	1
Wellingborough	10
Wetherby	27
Whitemoor	12
Winchester	23
Wolds	2
Woodhill	4
Wormwood Scrubs	15
Wymott	2
Total	919

Information is not held centrally on the number of staff or prisoners injured as a result of these incidents and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used to determine which fire authority is responsible for prisons and detention centres. [199793]

Paul Goggins: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for fire legislation and is the enforcing authority. Fire Crown Premises Inspection Group is the fire authority responsible for prisons and detention centres.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will commission an independent review of Prison Service fire advisors. [199795]

Paul Goggins: There is no need for an independent review. The Prison Service has already commissioned the Building Research Establishment (Fire) to undertake an independent Fire Safety Survey and Review of the prison estate. Those undertaking this work will assess the current situation with regard to fire safety, report their findings and make appropriate recommendations. The Prison Service will review the provision of professional technical advice on fire safety related issues.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the Fire Safety Section of the Prison Service has been restructured; and what new arrangements for the operation of the Section came into force on 4 October. [199796]

Paul Goggins: The Building Research Establishment (BRE) Fire was commissioned as an independent specialist body in September 2004 to carry out a survey and review of fire safety issues across the prison estate. This work concentrates primarily on fire safety risks in prison cells.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used to determine what firefighting equipment is available in each prison; and what assessment he makes of *(a)* the materials used in the construction, *(b)* the location and *(c)* the water pressure available in the vicinity of prisons and detention centres in making such decisions. [199797]

Paul Goggins: Fire legislation and risk assessments determine the requirements for firefighting equipment. The materials used in construction comply with Building Regulations, Fire Regulations and British and European Standards for fire, and prison operational and security needs.

At the building design stage, the need for appropriate location and water pressure for firefighting equipment is taken into account. Measures are taken to provide adequate firefighting facilities. There may include the installation of separate water tanks, ponds, lakes; and where necessary the water system is pressurised.

Prosecutions

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether more people were prosecuted in 2002 than were arrested. [199640]

Paul Goggins: The estimated number of persons arrested for at least one notifiable offence in England and Wales 2002 is 1,308,800. In the same period 642,800[1] persons were prosecuted for at least one notifiable offence.

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Department of the Serjeant at Arms

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what factors underlie the increase in the number of staff employed in the Serjeant at Arms Department between 2000 and 2004; and if he will make a statement. [202085]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: A major factor contributing to the increase in staff numbers in the Serjeant at Arms Department has been the growth in responsibilities of the Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD), to deal with the provision of IT to both Houses and associated support services. Furthermore, following the Braithwaite Review of the Department in 2000–01, new posts were identified in the Parliamentary Works Services Directorate. Various other posts were created, including posts of procurement manager, IT security officer and head of finance. The Central Tours Office was set up in 2003.

Parliamentary Communications Directorate

Mr. Forth: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what the cost was of *(a)* producing and *(b)* distributing the Parliamentary Communications Directorate information folder; how many were distributed; to whom; and if he will make a statement. [201077]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: 1,000 information folders have been produced in response to customer feedback showing that Members wanted to have a single point of reference for Member information. The folders cost £5.72 each. The folders are being issued to all Members of the House of Commons. Some folders were handed out in person at a recent Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD) customer service event and the remainder are being distributed via the internal mail service. Neither approach has resulted in readily attributable distribution costs.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation. [201275]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Code of Conduct for Special Advisers applies to temporary civil servants appointed under Article 3 of the Civil Service Order in Council. No staff in this category are employed in the House of Commons Service.

State Opening of Parliament

Lynne Jones: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what the estimated cost to the House was of the State Opening of Parliament on 23 November. [201717]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The final cost of the 2004 State Opening of Parliament is not yet known but is forecast to be similar to that of 2003 which, for Parliament as a whole, was £127,660. 60 per cent. of the cost, £76,596, is attributed to the House of Commons.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Contaminated Industrial Land

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department *(a)* provides and *(b)* plans to provide to (i) Armenia, (ii) Azerbaijan and (iii) Georgia to remediate contaminated industrial land; and what assessment he has made of the recent combined report on this matter by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Environment Programme. [202815]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is not involved in contaminated industrial land remediation in the countries of the South Caucasus. DFID's bilateral assistance programmes in Armenia and Georgia provide support for poverty reduction through improved governance and sustainable economic

growth. DFID does not have a bilateral assistance programme in Azerbaijan but is assisting the Government to participate in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

DFID has no plans to provide direct support to assist remediation of contaminated industrial land. DFID is aware that the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are supporting a joint initiative on Environment and Security (ENVSEC). They have published a recent report on "Environment and Security, Transforming Risks into Cooperation—The Case for the Southern Caucasus". The report provides a useful overview of related environment, security and development issues in the region. It includes challenges presented by contaminated industrial land, resulting from complete or partial closure of old soviet era industrial facilities.

DFID understands that the OSCE, UNDP and UNEP are developing a work programme to address the challenges presented in the report. DFID intends to use its involvement in international networks to encourage effective action to address this issue.

Crèche Facilities

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [200867]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) does not provide crèche facilities. However, DFID does provide holiday playschemes for it's staff in its offices in London and East Kilbride. The costs of the holiday playschemes are as follows:

East Kilbride

£10 annual registration fee for first child and £5 for each additional child plus £10 per child per day, paid wholly by the parents.

London

£30 per child per day of which the parent and DFID each pay £15 each. For financial year 2003–04, the cost to DFID for subsidising DFID parents' use of the Whitehall Holiday Playscheme was £2,295.

The Department for International Development is also intending to conduct a review of the childcare support provided and whether there is sufficient demand for other provisions, for instance an on-site nursery, childcare vouchers or salary sacrifice schemes.

Darfur

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures the Government are taking to ensure the safety of British aid workers in the Darfur region. [201973]

Hilary Benn: Humanitarian agencies in Darfur are operating in a very difficult and insecure environment. DFID deplores the recent upsurge in violence in Darfur which is worsening the insecurity in certain parts.

Along with the UN and others, the UK Government continue to press both the Government of Sudan and the rebels to stop the fighting and implement the Abuja humanitarian and security protocols, to allow unfettered and secure access throughout Darfur.

The UK has provided significant support to UN agencies and NGOs for security and communications to help agencies operate safely. DFID has recently provided further funding of £820,000 to the United Nations Security Co-Ordinator (UNSECOORD) to ensure that their full funding needs are met. This will allow it to expand its capacity and presence in Darfur, supporting it's security co-ordination and management of UN operations as well as to assist non-governmental-organisations. DFID has also provided £1.5 million to the UN's 'Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team' (FITTEST) to enhance security communications in North Sudan (including Darfur). This will help the UN operations to become 'Minimum Operational Security Standard' (MOSS) compliant. More broadly, the UK provides on-going support to 'Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief' (Red R) for security training for NGO staff globally. This year it has included a Security and Staff Safety Management training course in Nyala (South Darfur).

The African Union mission has a key role to play in improving the security situation on the ground. They are specifically mandated to

"contribute to a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief".

DFID is not looking at military protection for the aid convoys beyond this. NGOs and the UN consider that they would be more at risk of being targeted if they travelled under armed escort. We are keeping this situation under review.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [200856]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not bought-in or outsourced any accountancy services, within our central finance function, over the last two years because we have sufficient in-house capacity.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in his Department in each of the last two years. [200857]

Hilary Benn: The cost of new builds for DFID overseas office in the last two years was as follows:

Country	Planned estimate (£)
Democratic Republic of Congo	3,000,000
Ethiopia	2,800,000
Pakistan	2,229,000
Rwanda	896,000

There were no demolition rebuilds or Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects.

Iraq (Humanitarian Assistance)

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 345, to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Joan Ruddock) what the *(a)* number and *(b)* locations of civilians in and around Fallujah to whom humanitarian assistance could be provided. [202128]

Hilary Benn: The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reports that around 210,000 civilians from Fallujah are currently living in the area around Fallujah: 120,000 in and around Amiriyah, 24,000 in Hababniyah, 21,000 in and around Karma, 21,000 in Nieamiyah, 12,000 in and around Saklawiya, and 12,000 spread across the smaller towns of Heet, Aana, Rawa, and Hadeatha. Assessments by the Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) indicate that a further estimated 35,000 civilians from Fallujah are currently situated in Baghdad. It is estimated that only a few thousand civilians remain in the city of Fallujah.

The IIG reports that the majority of Fallujah's displaced civilians are staying with family and friends. Some are in schools, mosques, and Government buildings, and a small number are in tents. The IIG, the Multi-National Force, and humanitarian agencies agree that there is no humanitarian crisis in and around Fallujah.

The IIG is monitoring the situation and co-ordinating humanitarian work in the area. A cross-ministry Core Co-ordination Group has been established, and representatives from key Iraqi Ministries are now on the ground, conducting assessments and distributing essential supplies. The IIG is also working with the Multi-National Force, UN agencies, and NGOs to ensure safe access to Fallujah's displaced civilians, and to plan for their return to the city. DFID is providing technical advice to the IIG Fallujah Core Co-ordination Group and is maintaining close contact with representatives from the Multi-National Force and with humanitarian organisations on the ground.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200397]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID does not hold these costs centrally. However, in the last seven years we are aware of spending on training as follows:

Financial year	£ million
2003–04	4.4
2002–03	2
2001–02	1.4
2000–01	1
1999–2000	.85
1998–99	.58
1997–98	.88

DFID is committed to ensuring staff have the right skills and expertise to meet our commitment to the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals.

We manage numerous external training providers covering a range of subjects such as economics, working with Ministers and Parliament, language training, leadership and management.

A more definitive answer could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200417]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID does not hold all the information centrally. However, in the last three financial years we are aware of the following money paid to training providers for courses that we have cancelled:

	£000
2004–05	12,750
2003–04	13,750
2002–03	18,430

DFID values its staff. We are committed to providing training and learning opportunities and developing staff to their full potential.

A more definitive answer could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Turkmenistan/Armenia

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what development aid has been provided by the Government to the governments of *(a)* Turkmenistan and *(b)* Armenia in each year since 2000; what conditions have been attached in each case; and what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of those conditions. [201976]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's bilateral assistance to Armenia and Turkmenistan for the period 2000–04 was as follows:

Financial year	£ million
Armenia	
2000–01	1.935
2001–02	1.491

Financial year	£ million
2002–03	1.191
2003–04	2.753
2004–05	[1]2.500
Turkmenistan	
2000–01	0.111
2001–02	0.062
2002–03	0.162
2003–04	0.036
2004–05	[1]0.036

[1] Planned disbursements in the current 2004–05 financial year.

Additionally, the UK's attributed share of multilateral assistance to: (i) Armenia; (ii) Turkmenistan was as follows:

All figures in £ million

	EC	Other[1]	UN	World bank	Total
(i) Armenia					
2000	1.8	0.0	0.2	2.5	4.5
2001	1.2	0.0	0.2	4.9	6.3
2002	2.3	1.0	0.2	0.0	3.5
(ii) Turkmenistan					
2000	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5
2001	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.6
2002	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.4

[1] EBRD and Asian Development Fund

DFID's bilateral technical assistance is untied as set out in rules and regulations governing the delivery of DFID's development assistance—there are no general or specific conditions placed on recipient countries. In the period from 2000 DFID's bilateral assistance programme in Armenia has been provided in the form of technical assistance through a range of projects to support the Armenian Government's reform agenda.

Development assistance to Turkmenistan has been provided through a small grants scheme administered by the British embassy.

TRANSPORT

A30

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how long the inquiry into the A30 improvement at Goss Moor lasted; what period has elapsed since the conclusion of the inquiry; and when he expects a decision to be announced. [203076]

Mr. Jamieson: The local inquiry sat for seven days between Tuesday 13 January 2004 and Tuesday 3 February 2004. The Inspector's report was received on 30 April 2004 and the decision announced on Monday 29 November 2004.

Airline Pilots (Chemical Exposure)

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether UK airline captains experiencing cockpit or cabin air contamination event serious enough for pilots to use emergency oxygen have a responsibility to inform passengers to which chemicals they might have been exposed. [202745]

Charlotte Atkins: Pilots are required to use oxygen as a precautionary measure in all cases of suspected cockpit air abnormalities irrespective of severity of event. Flight crew are not professionally qualified to verify the cause of air contamination or identify what chemicals if any, passengers may have been exposed to. The captain has discretion to inform passengers of an event.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the findings of the 1999 UK Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment that neuropsychological abnormalities can occur as a long-term complication of acute organophosphate poisoning, with particular reference to aviation lubricant Exxon Mobil Jet oil. [202744]

Charlotte Atkins: The report concluded that acute organophosphate poisoning occurs mainly in sheep dipping or orchard spraying. There is no convincing evidence that it also occurs in relation to aviation lubricants, where organophosphates may be present only as trace elements.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Civil Aviation Authority records incidents of UK pilots flying with *(a)* headaches, *(b)* eye, nose and throat irritation, *(c)* concentration difficulties and *(d)* dizziness and nausea. [202743]

Charlotte Atkins: The CAA has a Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) system in place and any form of incident leading to incapacitation while on duty has to be reported by the pilot.

Jubilee Bridge

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effects of traffic congestion over the Jubilee Bridge across the Mersey on investment and economic growth in the North West. [202053]

Charlotte Atkins: These issues are addressed in Halton borough council's appraisal of the proposed New Mersey Crossing recently submitted to my Department. We are now considering this appraisal.

London Gateway, Shell Haven

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he received the inspector's report of the

inquiry into proposals for port and commercial development at London Gateway, Shell Haven; and when he expects to announce a decision. [203088]

Mr. Jamieson: The inspector's report of the inquiry into proposals for port and commercial development at London Gateway, Shell Haven was received by Government at the end of February. The report is receiving careful attention in my Department in respect of the port and in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of the commercial development. Decisions will be announced when consideration has been completed in accordance with statutory procedures.

Mobile Phones

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the level of compliance by drivers with the legislation forbidding the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving. [202282]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department has been undertaking regular surveys of the use of mobile phones while driving. The last survey carried out in September 2004 showed that 1.1 per cent. of car drivers surveyed on weekdays were using a hand-held phone. This compares with 1.5 per cent. in September 2003. Further details are set out in a leaflet "Mobile phone use by drivers, 2002–04", available on-line at www.trl.co.uk/abstracts/lf2094.pdf.

Motorway Closures

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on which occasions in November *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2003 motorways in England were closed to traffic for more than three hours. [203091]

Mr. Jamieson: Motorways in England were closed to traffic for more than three hours 39 times in November 2003 and 85 times in November 2004. Of the 2004 closures, at least 30 closures were due to major maintenance works and communications system upgrades. All of these closures were implemented in off-peak hours to minimise disruption to road users.

Road Improvements

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons he rejected the advice of the South West Regional Assembly on the options for improving the A303 and A30 to the west of Ilminster; and if he will make a statement. [202114]

Charlotte Atkins: The decision in favour of the A358 from near Ilminster to the M5 at Taunton follows completion of detailed technical work by the Highways Agency comparing the options of improving the A303 through the Blackdown Hills or improving the A358. The decision followed very careful consideration given to the full range of issues raised by the choice between these two alternative routes, including the scheme costs, economic benefits and environmental impacts. This also took into account the views of the Regional Assembly and other stakeholders.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of the total cost to public funds of seeking the advice of the South West Regional Assembly on alternative options for improving the A303 or A358 to the west of Ilminster. [202115]

Charlotte Atkins: Information on the costs incurred by the South West Regional Assembly is not held by the Department for Transport.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the basis was for his conclusion that improving the A358 provides better value for money than improving the A303 west of Ilminster. [202116]

Charlotte Atkins: All candidate schemes for the Targeted Programme of Improvements are assessed in accordance with the New Approach to Appraisal. This looks at the scheme's overall performance against our five appraisal criteria, namely Environment, Safety, Economy, Accessibility and Integration. The Highways Agency assessed both the A303 west of Ilminster and the A358 schemes on this basis. This showed that the A358 would cost around £90 million less than the A303 option, had a higher benefit to cost ratio and performed significantly better in terms of impacts on landscape, townscape, heritage of historic resources, biodiversity and the water environment. The A303 option performed better in relation to greenhouse gas emissions.

The performance of the schemes against other appraisal criteria was broadly similar. The overall assessment was that the A358 option performed significantly better against our appraisal criteria and therefore gave the higher value for money.

Road Safety Grants

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many grants for the promotion of road safety have been made by his Department under section 40 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 in each of the last seven years; and what the total cost has been. [203090]

Mr. Jamieson: Grant given between 1997–98 and 2003–04 is shown in the table:

Financial year	*Number of grants*	*Cost of grants (£)*
1997–98	6	312,755
1998–99	2	281,250
1999–2000	11	335,037
2000–01	13	377,129
2001–02	11	339,578
2002–03	18	360,231
2003–04	18	384,975
Total	79	2,390,955

So far 20 grants have been given during 2004–05, totalling £522,669. Further applications are still being considered for this current financial year.

Wheel Loss

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road fatalities arising from the loss of road wheels from heavy commercial vehicles occurred in each of the last five years; how many wheel loss incidents there were in that period; what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and

(b) evaluated on this issue; and what assessment he has made of the effects of safety wheel nuts in reducing accidents. [201197]

Mr. Jamieson: Figures are not currently recorded in the form requested, but I attach a table showing the statistics available. It should be noted that there may sometimes be delays in listing figures while the findings of coroners' courts are awaited.

Heavy goods vehicles and trailers—wheel detachment—January 1997 to August 2003

	Wheel detachment cases	*Fatalities*
HGV rigids and tractor units	175	3
HGV semi-trailers	44	3
HGV drawbar trailers	10	0

Some research was undertaken in 1997, following which a guidance leaflet was issued. More investigation is currently in hand with findings expected shortly, and further research to look at wheel fixings and methods of tightening is under consideration for next year. The Department has not commissioned research into locking wheel nuts, but work on behalf of the British Standards Institution indicated that a loss of clamp force—due to settlement between the interfaces of the wheel-fixing assembly—can take place without rotation of the nut. Thus, although use of locking devices can prevent loss of wheel nuts the devices cannot counteract a loss of clamp force, and excessive wear as a consequence of this could result in the loss of a wheel while nuts were still attached. Nonetheless there might be benefit in some cases, with such equipment preventing or delaying total loss of a wheel.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the number of fatalities caused by the loss of wheels from heavy commercial vehicles; what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* incidents caused by such losses; what research he is undertaking into this problem; what assessment he has made of the availability of safety wheel nuts; and if he will make a statement. [201198]

Mr. Jamieson: On *(a)* and *(b)* , figures relating to heavy goods vehicle wheel detachment cases and fatalities have already been given in an associated response given today "(UIN 201197)". Some research was undertaken in the late 1990s and further research is currently under way with more under consideration. While research has concentrated on the extent, rather than the causes, of wheel loss the results have shown that a major factor is lack of regular and effective maintenance. In the Department's view, while locking wheel nuts can prevent loss of wheel nuts and might in some cases prevent total loss of a wheel, they cannot prevent the loss of clamp force as a result of which it would be possible for wheel loss to occur, through excessive wear, while wheel nuts were still attached.

Roadworks

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used by the Highways Agency to determine whether *(a)* treatment of stretches or routes for non-maintenance reasons is included in the annual budget of the Highways Agency and *(b)* such treatment includes noise barriers. [200638]

Mr. Jamieson: The annual budget of the Highways Agency is agreed by Ministers taking account of the resources available for transport and competing priorities from the different programmes. Within that budget, priority is given to maintaining the strategic network, reducing congestion and improving safety, in accordance with the key targets set the Highways Agency. A ring-fenced annual budget of £5 million is allocated to treating noise problems at identified sites. Priorities for resurfacing of concrete roads ahead of maintenance need, subject to the availability of funding, were set out in the Secretary of State's announcement of 1 April 2003. The Highways Agency's budget and programme will be set out in its Business Plan, due to be published in the new year.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will allow members of the pre-October 2002 Civil Service Pension Scheme to remarry without losing their original pension entitlement; and if she will make a statement. [202956]

Ruth Kelly: For clarification, members of the pre-October 2002 Civil Service Pension Scheme do not lose their pension on remarriage. However, the surviving spouses of deceased former members do have their widows'/widowers' pensions stopped on remarriage or cohabitation. I presume that it is these widows' and widowers' pensions to which the hon. Member's question relates.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on 13 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 317W.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202341]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in line with the rest of the civil service, does not discriminate against staff or eligible applicants for posts on the grounds of age. Decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management are based solely on objective and job related criteria.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in her Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202339]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's current target date for answering all correspondence is 18 working days.

Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament/Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library of the House.

Crèche Facilities

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what crèche facilities are provided by her Department; and at what cost. [202340]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not provide crèche facilities. The Department provides support to working parents by participating in the Westminster Holiday Play scheme. The scheme provides holiday child care for children aged between four and 12 years. The cost per day is £30 and DCMS contributes half.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in her Department in each of the last two years. [202330]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS has not been involved in any new builds, demolition rebuilds or private finance initiative projects in the last two years.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) her Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which she has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [202333]

Mr. Caborn: There are no empty properties owned or leased by DCMS. The information requested in respect of agencies and non-departmental public bodies could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by her Department in each of the last two years. [202334]

Mr. Caborn: During 2002–03 £120,000 was spent on building fabric in compliance with lease requirements and £102,000 to redecorate and re-carpet a floor vacated by a tenant to enable occupation by departmental staff. The sum of £8,088 has also been spent in 2003–04 decorating to repair the effects of fair wear and tear.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of refurbishing each Ministerial Private Office was in the last two years. [202335]

Mr. Caborn: Work carried out for fair wear and tear on private offices during the last two years has been at a cost of £8,801.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost has been of criminal damage to her Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202337]

Mr. Caborn: There have not been any incidents of criminal damage, including graffiti, involving DCMS property during the last two years.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for her Department in each of the last two years. [202331]

Mr. Caborn: Ministerial cars are provided by the Government Car and Despatch service, at a cost of:

	£
2002–03	280,079
2003–04	250,183

The cost of taxis in the last two full years is as follows:

	£
2002–03	21,878
2003–04	22,235

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on energy costs incurred by her Department in each of the last two years. [202332]

Mr. Caborn: The cost of energy procured by DCMS is as follows:

	£
2003–04	
Electricity	253,616
Gas	52,015
2002–03	
Electricity	276,019
Gas	59,503

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by her Department in each of the last two years. [202336]

Mr. Caborn: The staff restaurant and meetings hospitality are a single contract, the cost of which over the last two full years was:

	£
2002–03	
Restaurant	75,516
Hospitality	85,666
2003–04	
Restaurant	67,431
Hospitality	85,967

A new catering contract was let in October 2004 at a saving for restaurant services of almost £20,000.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by her Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202343]

Mr. Caborn: The only equipment leases are those for multi-function copier printers, at a leasing cost of £52,355 per annum including maintenance and software support but excluding cost per copy.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the gender pay gap among staff in her Department. [202342]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS completed an equal pay review in 2002 and has since taken action to narrow the gaps in pay between men and women. As a result of our equal pay action the percentage difference in salaries between men and women has reduced in all grades, except grade D where the average salary is higher for women than that for men.

IT Contracts

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the *(a)* projected cost at the time of tender and *(b)* actual cost at the time of completion was for each IT contract commissioned by her Department over the last five years. [201613]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has let four IT contracts in the past five years. The costs of the first are set out as follows. The remainder are for ongoing services so it is not possible to give a completion cost, however the costs of operation have been as per the original estimates.

NCC for IT security testing—projected cost £26,500, actual costs £26,500.

National Sports Foundation

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when Patrick Carter's report on the Government's proposed National Sports Foundation will be published. [202526]

Mr. Caborn: Paragraph 6.50 of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's pre-Budget report presented to Parliament on 2 December sets out the provisional interim findings of Lord Carter's Review of funding for sport and states that his report will be published in spring 2005.

Olympic/Paralympic Athletes

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of Great British Olympians and Paralympians *(a)* medal winners and *(b)* squad members were educated at secondary level within the state system; and what the figures were for the previous Olympics. [202918]

Mr. Caborn: This information is not held by Sport England or UK Sport.

Sports and Community Clubs

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her most recent estimate is of the number of sports clubs that will face an increase in their licensing fees as a result of the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; and what estimate she has made of the average percentage increase in the size of the licensing fees to be paid by sports clubs following the implementation of the Act. [202797]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* We have looked at the position for registered members' clubs (sports and others) of which there are 20,000. The cost of a premises licence or club premises certificate represents a saving for most sports clubs over a period of 10 years depending on the scope and regularity of the club's activities. The fee of £16 currently paid for registered members' clubs is only one of the fees that they currently pay. If they have music and dancing after normal opening hours they require certificates of suitability (ranging from £50 to £500); special hours certificates (£25); and special orders of exemption (£10 a time). Each of these is charged individually and some are required on multiple occasions in a year. Under the Licensing Act 2003 they would all be included in the fee for a single club premises certificate. Any percentage increase or decrease in fees for a club will therefore depend on the range of certificates currently held. The Government's policy is that licensing fees must be set at a level that allows full recovery of the administration, inspection and enforcement costs falling on licensing authorities. It would be wholly wrong for central or local taxation to subsidise the consumption of alcohol, and it would be difficult to argue that the best way to promote sport is through Government subsidising sports club bars.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Correspondence

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Minister for Children will acknowledge the letter sent to her by the Lowe Syndrome Trust. [203270]

Margaret Hodge: I received a letter from the Lowe Syndrome Trust on 19 October. I have since made contact with the Trust and am due to meet with representatives of the organisation in the new year.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [200816]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The total of costs classified as purchased accountancy services in the accounts of the Department in 2002–03 and 2003–04 respectively is £69,584.00 and £190,990.28.

Education Funding

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* average primary formula spending share per pupil and *(b)* average secondary formula spending share per pupil is in each local education authority in 2005–06, listed in descending order of secondary formula allocations. [202671]

Mr. Miliband: In England, the formula for the primary and secondary sub-blocks comprises a basic entitlement for each pupil, which is the same across the country, plus a top-up for each pupil with additional educational needs, which is again the same across the country, plus top-ups for areas where it costs more to recruit and retain teachers. Local education authorities with a greater proportion of pupils with additional educational needs or higher average earnings will receive a higher level of funding per pupil. The following table shows the average School Formula Spending Share for primary and secondary pupils, as announced on 2 December 2004 in the provisional Local Government Settlement for 2005–06. The figures are set out in descending order.

Primary	£
Tower Hamlets	4,155
City of London	3,991
Hackney	3,820
Isles of Scilly	3,804
Islington	3,721
Westminster	3,682
Lambeth	3,661
Camden	3,654
Southwark	3,611
Hammersmith and Fulham	3,528
Lewisham	3,448
Greenwich	3,430
Kensington and Chelsea	3,377
Wandsworth	3,376
Newham	3,321
Brent	3,239
Haringey	3,185
Ealing	3,157
Hounslow	3,114
Slough	2,999
Harrow	2,979
Waltham Forest	2,974
Barnet	2,927
Enfield	2,882
Hillingdon	2,880
Merton	2,873
Redbridge	2,852
Manchester	2,845
Barking and Dagenham	2,836
Birmingham	2,821
Leicester	2,786
Luton	2,778
Reading	2,769
Kingston upon Thames	2,747
Croydon	2,738
Bradford	2,729
Nottingham City	2,710
Sandwell	2,705
Sutton	2,701
Blackburn	2,700
Peterborough	2,700
West Berkshire	2,676
Liverpool	2,673
Oldham	2,669
Richmond upon Thames	2,663
Wolverhampton	2,658
Knowsley	2,652
Milton Keynes	2,644
Windsor and Maidenhead	2,638
Rochdale	2,631
Middlesbrough	2,626
Surrey	2,622
Southampton	2,618
Walsall	2,613

Primary	£
Isle of Wight Council	2,611
Wokingham	2,607
Thurrock	2,599
Bracknell Forest	2,599
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,594
Buckinghamshire	2,588
Salford	2,587
Coventry	2,585
City of Kingston-upon-Hull	2,582
Bexley	2,579
Halton	2,578
Kirklees	2,577
City of Bristol	2,576
Bolton	2,572
Oxfordshire	2,568
Stoke on Trent	2,555
Portsmouth	2,554
Hertfordshire	2,546
Herefordshire	2,537
Havering	2,536
Hartlepool	2,531
Bromley	2,531
Calderdale	2,528
Cambridgeshire	2,528
South Tyneside	2,527
Doncaster	2,526
Bedfordshire	2,524
Derby	2,521
Redcar and Cleveland	2,518
Wiltshire	2,514
Cornwall	2,513
Tameside	2,510
Sheffield	2,510
Lincolnshire	2,510
Cumbria	2,503
North Yorkshire	2,499
North Lincolnshire	2,497
Devon	2,496
Rutland	2,496
Norfolk	2,495
North East Lincolnshire	2,495
Northumberland	2,493
Blackpool	2,493
Durham	2,493
Sunderland	2,490
Rotherham	2,485
Shropshire	2,484
Leeds	2,483
Gateshead	2,481
The Wrekin	2,479
Dudley	2,478
Wirral	2,474
Barnsley	2,472
Brighton and Hove	2,469
Darlington	2,467
Southend	2,466
Lancashire	2,464
Northamptonshire	2,456
Stockton-on-Tees	2,456
St. Helens	2,451
Essex	2,451
Bury	2,449
Wakefield	2,448
East Sussex	2,447
Kent	2,446
Warwickshire	2,446
East Riding of Yorkshire	2,441
Plymouth	2,439
Suffolk	2,438
Hampshire	2,438
Swindon	2,434
Somerset	2,433
Gloucestershire	2,430

	£
Primary	
Trafford	2,429
West Sussex	2,429
North Tyneside	2,428
Torbay	2,428
Wigan	2,424
Medway	2,421
North Somerset	2,418
Sefton	2,411
Cheshire	2,411
Bath and North East Somerset	2,409
Dorset	2,409
South Gloucestershire	2,406
Nottinghamshire	2,405
Derbyshire	2,402
Solihull	2,398
Bournemouth	2,395
Stockport	2,382
Warrington	2,374
Staffordshire	2,374
Worcestershire	2,358
Leicestershire	2,355
York	2,346
Poole	2,325
Secondary	
Tower Hamlets	5,051
City of London	4,860
Hackney	4,770
Southwark	4,706
Lambeth	4,698
Islington	4,695
Westminster	4,500
Lewisham	4,492
Isles of Scilly	4,452
Camden	4,449
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,446
Wandsworth	4,386
Greenwich	4,352
Kensington and Chelsea	4,216
Newham	4,026
Brent	3,987
Haringey	3,943
Ealing	3,894
Hounslow	3,815
Waltham Forest	3,780
Slough	3,736
Merton	3,715
Barnet	3,682
Harrow	3,662
Hillingdon	3,629
Barking and Dagenham	3,619
Enfield	3,601
Croydon	3,600
Manchester	3,589
Reading	3,584
Birmingham	3,534
Sutton	3,527
Luton	3,523
Redbridge	3,515
Kingston upon Thames	3,510
Richmond upon Thames	3,479
Nottingham City	3,441
Bradford	3,405
Sandwell	3,399
Bracknell Forest	3,389
Windsor and Maidenhead	3,389
Surrey	3,389
Peterborough	3,384
Liverpool	3,382
Wolverhampton	3,374
Milton Keynes	3,371
West Berkshire	3,365
Wokingham	3,365

	£
Secondary	
Bexley	3,353
Thurrock	3,351
Knowsley	3,344
Oldham	3,343
Rochdale	3,339
Southampton	3,334
Bromley	3,330
Middlesbrough	3,328
Havering	3,326
City of Bristol	3,320
Walsall	3,317
Leicester	3,313
Halton	3,300
Salford	3,296
Blackburn	3,287
City of Kingston-upon-Hull	3,285
Hertfordshire	3,285
Portsmouth	3,285
Buckinghamshire	3,284
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,273
Coventry	3,260
Stoke on Trent	3,256
Isle of Wight Council	3,256
South Tyneside	3,229
Bolton	3,229
Oxfordshire	3,228
Kirklees	3,224
Hartlepool	3,222
Tameside	3,218
Derby	3,217
Sheffield	3,214
Calderdale	3,206
Dudley	3,200
Blackpool	3,200
Sunderland	3,194
Brighton and Hove	3,190
Bedfordshire	3,186
Redcar and Cleveland	3,183
Wirral	3,183
Gateshead	3,180
Leeds	3,178
Southend	3,176
North East Lincolnshire	3,170
Rotherham	3,168
Doncaster	3,167
Bury	3,166
Barnsley	3,162
St. Helens	3,150
Trafford	3,150
Wakefield	3,149
Plymouth	3,144
Wigan	3,144
Stockton-on-Tees	3,142
The Wrekin	3,142
North Tyneside	3,134
Darlington	3,133
Durham	3,133
Torbay	3,132
Swindon	3,127
Essex	3,127
Cambridgeshire	3,122
Medway	3,121
Sefton	3,120
Kent	3,112
Hampshire	3,110
Lancashire	3,108
Northamptonshire	3,107
West Sussex	3,105
Bath and North East Somerset	3,103
Stockport	3,099
Solihull	3,099
North Somerset	3,098
East Sussex	3,093

Secondary	£
Bournemouth	3,093
Warrington	3,091
North Lincolnshire	3,089
Cornwall	3,083
South Gloucestershire	3,080
Warwickshire	3,074
Cheshire	3,068
Nottinghamshire	3,065
Wiltshire	3,063
Northumberland	3,062
Gloucestershire	3,057
Norfolk	3,050
Cumbria	3,042
Derbyshire	3,040
Lincolnshire	3,038
Suffolk	3,035
Poole	3,032
Devon	3,027
York	3,025
Staffordshire	3,021
Worcestershire	3,012
Herefordshire	3,007
Somerset	3,004
East Riding of Yorkshire	3,001
Shropshire	2,986
Dorset	2,985
North Yorkshire	2,978
Leicestershire	2,974
Rutland	2,974

Education, Youth and Culture Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outcome was of the Education, Youth and Culture Council held on 15 and 16 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [201337]

Dr. Howells: I attended the Education session of this Council. Peter Peacock, Minister for Education and Young People at the Scottish Executive, also attended and led on Youth issues. Lord McIntosh, Minister for Heritage and the Media attended the Culture Council. Colleagues at DCMS will write directly to my hon. Friend, with a short summary of what happened on their agenda items.

During the Education session, Ministers discussed the Commission's proposals on the new Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme, and welcomed the commitment to simplify administration. The UK submitted a paper calling for SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timed) objectives, effective evaluation, a flexible approach to languages, a separate cross-cutting strand and a focus on disadvantaged groups.

The Council 'adopted' the Presidency Report on Citizenship in Education, which calls on member states to develop citizenship curricula and to exchange best practice on citizenship education. This will now be transmitted to the Spring European Council.

Conclusions on Vocational Education and Training were 'adopted' without comment. They call for better links between vocational training and academic education, to allow individuals to move more freely between the two.

Will Hutton, member of the Lisbon mid-term review group, presented the Kok Report on preparations for the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2005. He reported slow progress towards achieving the Lisbon goals: only three member states had achieved 70 per cent. employment, 60 per cent. employment of older workers and 50 per cent. employment of women.

There were three items under Any Other Business: Commission proposals for a Recommendation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education; a paper from Portugal about an initiative to encourage more sport in Higher Education, as part of the European year of Education through Sport; the European Parliament's "adoption without amendment" of the Council's Common Position on the Decision to establish Europass at Second Reading.

In the afternoon session, the Council discussed the Commission's proposals for the "Youth in Action" Programme 2007–2013, and called for greater emphasis on helping those less advantaged. The majority supported the proposals to extend the age range from 13 to 30 years.

Conclusions on the current Youth Programme 2000–06 were "adopted without Comment". They called for the Commission to refocus the remainder of the programme—e.g. to include more young people with fewer opportunities, simplify procedures, improve evaluation, increase publicity and consider including more third countries.

Ministers "agreed two Council Resolutions" on priorities for the Youth Open Method of Co-ordination in the areas of Youth and Volunteering, and a better understanding of the issues affecting young people. The Commission presented its recent Communication evaluating the first two years of the Youth Open Method of Co-ordination.

A copy of the Council Minutes will be placed in the Library in due course.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200169]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 10–11W, by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe.

GCSE Grades/Results

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in England achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C,

including *(a)* mathematics, *(b)* English and *(c)* mathematics and English in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [199917]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of examinees failed the GCSE in each of the last 10 years in *(a)* physical education, *(b)* history, *(c)* mathematics and *(d)* physics. [202294]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is as follows:

	Number of pupils entered for GCSE			*Percentage achieved no passes*		
Subject group year	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
Physics						
2004	25,562	16,885	42,447	0	0	0
2003	24,029	16,035	40,064	0	0	0
2002	23,297	15,343	38,640	0	1	0
2001	23,006	15,449	38,455	0	1	0
2000	22,799	14,733	37,532	0	0	0
1999	22,766	14,439	37,205	0	1	0
1998	22,358	13,847	36,205	1	1	1
1997	21,892	12,649	34,541	1	1	1
1996	22,482	13,245	35,727	1	1	1
1995	21,640	11,589	33,229	1	1	1
1994	23,193	12,201	35,394	1	1	1
Mathematics						
2004	304,575	301,070	605,645	4	3	4
2003	295,328	289,689	585,017	4	4	4
2002	287,619	281,232	568,851	3	3	3
2001	284,773	279,079	563,852	4	3	3
2000	272,284	267,650	539,934	3	3	3
1999	271,503	265,276	536,779	4	4	4
1998	265,930	260,952	526,882	5	5	5
1997	269,508	264,484	533,992	5	4	4
1996	271,209	266,550	537,759	5	4	4
1995	264,060	258,230	522,290	5	5	5
1994	242,140	236,944	479,084	5	4	5
History						
2004	103,377	102,022	205,399	4	2	3
2003	97,913	96,888	194,801	4	2	3
2002	97,647	96,298	193,945	4	3	3
2001	97,120	98,111	195,231	7	4	5
2000	93,694	96,585	190,279	3	2	3
1999	92,780	96,154	188,934	4	2	3
1998	92,386	96,684	189,070	4	3	3
1997	101,387	106,099	207,486	5	3	4
1996	104,478	107,929	212,407	5	3	4
1995	108,689	114,668	223,357	6	4	5
1994	99,847	107,503	207,350	5	3	4
Physical Education						
2004	80,148	41,290	121,438	1	1	1
2003	74,128	36,616	110,744	1	1	1
2002	71,562	40,188	111,750	1	1	1
2001	68,421	37,230	105,651	9	9	9
2000	62,542	34,227	96,769	1	1	1
1999	60,036	33,467	93,503	1	1	1
1998	54,152	29,513	83,665	1	1	1
1997	51,928	28,986	80,914	3	3	3
1996	48,828	26,524	75,352	4	3	3
1995	41,185	22,072	63,257	4	4	4
1994	31,773	18,610	50,383	5	5	5

Note:
2004 data is provisional and are subject to change.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of GCSE results reported in league tables for schools were GNVQ passes in the last year for which figures are available. [200443]

Mr. Miliband: The 2003 Secondary School Performance Tables incorporated results in GCSEs, GCSE short courses, Full and Part 1 GNVQs. The following table shows the number of attempts and passes in GCSEs and GNVQs:

GCSE and GNVQ attempts and passes by 15 year old pupils in 2003

	Attempts	*Passes (A*-C)*	*Passes (D-G)*
GCSE	5,030,588	2,894,241	1,996,723
Part 1 intermediate GNVQ	68,011	47,100	—

GCSE and GNVQ attempts and passes by 15 year old pupils in 2003

	Attempts	Passes (A*-C)	Passes (D-G)
Full intermediate GNVQ	44,130	33,361	—
Part 1 Foundation GNVQ	16,654	—	8,913
Full Foundation GNVQ	4,634	—	2,540

Note:
Intermediate GNVQs are equivalent to grades A*-C at GCSE and foundation GNVQs are equivalent to grades D-G at GCSE.

The contribution made by GNVQs to the percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving five or more grades A*-C nationally is shown in the table:

2002/03

Academic year	Number/percentage
Number of 15 year old pupils	622,122
Percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving 5+A*-C GCSE/GNVQ	52.9
Percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving 5+A*-C by GCSE only	49.9
Percentage of pupils needing GNVQs to achieve 5+ A*-C	3.0

Office for Fair Access

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people are employed by the Office for Fair Access; what the running cost of the Office was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on its future. [203112]

Dr. Howells: In addition to the Director of Fair Access to Higher Education, who was appointed by the Secretary of State in October this year, the number of staff employed at the Office for Fair Access is five, of which two are part-time. The cost of the Office will average £500,000 a year. The role of the Office for Fair Access in approving and monitoring access agreements is critical to ensuring that access is widened not narrowed when higher variable fees are introduced from 2006.

Sixth-form Education

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he is taking to close the funding gap between schools and colleges for the provision of sixth-form education. [201859]

Dr. Howells: The Government have already taken action to narrow the funding gap between school sixth forms and further education colleges. For the academic year 2003–04, base funding rates per qualification increased by 3 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 4.5 per cent. for further education colleges on a broadly comparable basis. In 2004–05, funding rates for colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent., while those for school sixth forms rose by 4 per cent. We expect to see this trend continue in the 2005–06 academic year.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200384]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department is responsible for encouraging and supporting learning and development throughout England. It has set itself the objective of becoming an exemplar learning organisation and is committed to providing access to training for its staff and to developing them to their full potential. To this end it has established leading edge e-learning facilities and continues to develop this and other learning solutions for its staff.

Most provision is now delivered by external Strategic Partners. Learning events are available on all four sites in Sheffield, London, Darlington and Runcorn. They include the following programmes:

- Management and Leadership
- Introduction to Leadership
- Management and Improving Performance
- Communicating Policy
- Contract Management
- Programme and Project Management
- Skills for Life
- Finance and Resource Management
- Language Training

We are unable to provide all of the information requested as retained records go back only to 2002. Details after this period are provided as follows:

	£ million
2002/03	2.179
2003/04	2.429

These figures cover most of the formal aspects of learning and development funded by the Department from centrally-held budgets. They do not include, for example, such areas as coaching by line managers, interchange or secondment. Nor do they include training identified and paid for from other devolved budgets, for example towards degree courses.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200404]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* We do not collate centrally the total cost of financial penalties incurred as a result of course or event cancellation.

We do however keep cancellations of centrally-run events to a minimum by:

- strongly encouraging attendance on events that have been booked by individuals or groups
- identifying in advance the minimum number of people for which it is cost effective to run an event
- identifying as early as possible when it does, untypically, become unfeasible to run events, and
- agreeing wherever possible with our strategic partners to postpone rather than cancel events.

Veterinary Medicine

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate places were *(a)* available for and *(b)* filled by students wishing to study veterinary medicine in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [200733]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* For English HEIs veterinary science numbers are not subject to any quota. The number of places available is determined independently by each institution from within their block grant.

The available information on numbers of students studying veterinary science has been taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record and is follows:

All domiciled undergraduate entrants on veterinary science courses at UK HEIs

Academic year	*Total undergraduates*
1994/95	540
1995/96	580
1996/97	590
1997/98	690
1998/99	730
1999/2000	750
2000/01	790
2001/02	940
2002/03[1]	900

[1] For the academic year 2002/03 HESA uses a different method of allocating students to subject groups and so figures are not comparable to earlier years.

Note:
Figures are a snapshot as at 1 December and are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record

TREASURY

Benefit Costs

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will assess the cost to public funds of a 24-year-old man *(a)* drawing invalidity benefit and disability living allowance but not entering employment for 40 years, assuming 2004 prices and current benefit rates and *(b)* the contribution to public funds of a 24-year-old man working for 40 years, assuming average earnings and current tax rates. [202857]

Dawn Primarolo: The details of any calculation depend on assumptions about individual circumstances. Comparing a single childless person receiving long-term incapacity benefit of £74.15 a week and a lower rate disability living allowance of £15.55, with a similar person with median full-time earnings of £422.10 a week paying £68.12 income tax and £36.42 employee national insurance contributions with associated employer national insurance contributions of £42.38, could give a differential impact on public funds of £236.62 a week. Multiplying this by 52 weeks and 40 years would give a figure of around £492,000.

Civil Service

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of Civil Service jobs which will be dispersed to Liverpool; what the nature of the jobs will be; and what the timescale is. [203082]

John Healey: As announced in Spending Review 2004, the Government are committed to relocating over 20,000 public sector posts out of London and the South East by 2010. It is not possible to say at this stage how many Civil Service jobs will be relocated to Liverpool. Departments are currently working through detailed implementation planning in consultation with stakeholders including unions, staff and local stakeholders. Only a small proportion of location choices have so far been determined. Where location choices have been decided, the numbers of new posts being created in the area have not been finalised.

We are monitoring the progress of the relocation programme closely.

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his PBR speech, the Department of Work and Pensions and Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise have reported that some posts have been relocated to Liverpool.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202497]

John Healey: The Treasury's target for replying to all correspondence is 15 working days from receipt.

Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament/Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library of the House.

Film Industry

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his intention that films already in their principal photography stage and entered into in good faith under existing section 42 arrangements should be excluded in the changes to sale and leaseback arrangements under section 42 relief for film-making investment. [R] [202144]

Dawn Primarolo: In his pre-Budget report on 2 December the Chancellor announced two measures targeted at film tax avoidance schemes that typically use sale and leaseback arrangements. These measures do not apply to films that were in principal photography at the date of the PBR announcement.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he intends to take to ensure that the achieved relief for film investment under the new section 48 arrangement should amount to 20 per cent. [R] [202146]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue issued a technical note on 21 September 2004 with details of a proposed new tax credit for British qualifying films with

a budget up to £20 million. In his pre-Budget report on 2 December, the Chancellor confirmed that the Government are engaged in discussions with industry representatives to increase its understanding of the industry and to develop the detail of the operation of the credit.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [202506]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury has undertaken two gender pay reviews. These reviews take place within three months of the pay settlement. Both reviews have shown no significant differences in pay between the genders.

Government Borrowing

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Government have borrowed from the national insurance fund in each year since 1998–99. [201907]

Dawn Primarolo: Most of the national insurance fund account is invested in gilts. This reduces the need for Government borrowing elsewhere. Details of investments from the national insurance fund account are in the annual accounts of the national insurance fund investment account published annually by the Stationery Office.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what efficiency savings have been made in the Inland Revenue in each of the last seven years; and if he will make a statement; [202960]

(2) what the cost was of running the Inland Revenue in each of the last seven years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [202961]

Dawn Primarolo: Details of the costs of running the Inland Revenue together with information on efficiency savings and productivity improvements are available in Inland Revenue annual reports on the Inland Revenue website at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk and the House Library.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff have been employed by the Inland Revenue in each of the last seven years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [202962]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 126–27W.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent efficiency assessments have been made of working practices in the Inland Revenue; and if he will make a statement. [202963]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has a broad, proactive and continuous approach to the assessment of the efficiency of our working practices.

Staff and managers are encouraged to continually improve the efficiency of their work. In addition, major current programmes such as Modernising Payroll Processes for Customers (MPPC) and the e-Services Programme will focus on improving working practices, thus delivering efficiencies and improving the quality of services and the choice offered to our customers.

Recent reviews of business practices covered a wide range of services and operations across the Inland Revenue as part of the Modernising Government and Public Service Reform agendas. Although the prime focus of this work was not efficiency but better quality service, potential efficiencies were identified. The reviews included a focus on the processes and behaviours surrounding the channels by which customers contact and transact with the Department, to enable customers to fully meet their obligations and receive their entitlements.

A series of pilot process reviews has been implemented, following latest international best practices, of the Revenue's major processes and activities with the aim of delivering improvements in customer services and operational efficiency.

International Finance Facility

Tony Baldry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) which G7 countries support the International Finance Facility; [202664]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Secretariat for the Commission for Africa regarding the International Finance Facility; [202666]

(3) what discussions he has had with the *(a)* World Bank and *(b)* African Development Bank on the International Finance Facility; [202667]

(4) what discussions he has had with *(a)* UN agencies and *(b)* non-governmental organisations regarding the International Finance Facility. [202668]

Mr. Timms: The UK is building a broad coalition of support for the International Finance Facility (IFF) in preparation for the UK presidencies of the G7/8 and EU in 2005. As part of this process, the IFF has been widely discussed within the G8 group of leading industrialised nations, the European Union, the United Nations, the G20 group of leading and emerging economies, the Commonwealth, at international meetings of the IMF and World Bank, with emerging market and developing countries, and with international organisations such as the UNDP, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the WHO and NEPAD.

40 countries—including France and, last week, Italy—have given their support to the IFF. We have also received the support of a wide range of non-governmental organisations, faith groups and the business community.

Discussions at the recent annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF increased support for the IFF, which was affirmed in the World Bank's final paper on Aid Effectiveness and Financing Modalities to be both technically feasible and the most advanced proposal for frontloading aid.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who will assess the poverty reduction plans of recipient countries for them to receive funds from the International Finance Facility. [202670]

Mr. Timms: The detailed mechanics of how disbursement decisions are made would depend on the IFF's governance structure, which would be for agreement by donors at the establishment of the IFF. The UK's proposal is that the IFF will use existing disbursement mechanisms that have been tried, tested and shown to be effective. It will not seek to become a new body for disbursing aid with new criteria that developing countries will need to meet.

Job Vacancies (Strathkelvin and Bearsden)

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many unfilled job vacancies there were in Strathkelvin and Bearsden in the last period for which figures are available. [202544]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. John Lyons, dated 7 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about job vacancies in Strathkelvin and Bearsden. I am replying in his absence. (202544)

Figures for vacancies in total are only available from the ONS Vacancy Survey, which provides information at national level only. For local areas, figures for vacancies held by the Jobcentre Plus administrative system are available for periods up to April 2001. However, due to changes to that system, more recent figures are only available on a reliable basis for newly notified vacancies.

In April 2001 there were 11,258 unfilled vacancies which had been registered to Jobcentres in the Glasgow travel to work area. An equivalent figure for Strathkelvin and Bearsden is not available.

The Jobcentre Plus vacancy figure represents only those vacancies notified to Jobcentres, not all vacancies in an area.

National Insurance Contributions

Bob Russell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people with a shortfall in earnings for national insurance contributions were not sent a deficiency warning notice in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement. [202268]

Dawn Primarolo: Deficiency notices for the six-year period from 1996–97 to 2001–02 were issued in a single exercise. A total of 10.02 million notices were issued between October 2003 and September 2004. Everyone of working age who should have received a deficiency notice during the six-year interval was sent one during the recent exercise. DWP are undertaking a similar exercise for pensioners. We do not routinely keep statistics about people who have not been sent a deficiency notice and this would be available only at disproportionate cost.

Northern Ireland Statistics

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the levels of *(a)* gross domestic product per head expressed as a percentage of the UK average and *(b)* average weekly earnings are in Northern Ireland. [202865]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Trimble, dated 7 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about *(a)* GDP per head in Northern Ireland expressed as a percentage of UK and *(b)* average weekly earnings in Northern Ireland. I am replying in his absence. (202865).

The estimates in table A are based on the regional Gross Value Added[1] (GVA) estimates published in April 2004. These are available on the National Statistics website at

http ://www. statistics. gov.uk/StatBase/Product. asp? vlnk = 7359

GVA figures for 2003 are not yet available, the latest published information is for 2002 and can be seen in table A.

Table A

Northern Ireland GVA[1] per head as a percentage of UK GVA per head 2002

Region	*GVA per head 2002 (£)*	*Percentage of UK GVA per head*
Northern Ireland	12,081	79.2
United Kingdom less Extra Regio[2]	15,259	—

[1] Information presented here is Gross Value Added (GVA) which is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products.

[2] Extra Regio is that part of the UK's economic territory which cannot be allocated to any specific region.

Data Source:

Office for National Statistics: Regional GVA (Published April 2004)

Average earnings figures for 2004 are presented in table B

Table B

Northern Ireland Average Earnings 2004[1]

Mean weekly earnings in Northern Ireland (£)	*Median weekly earnings in Northern Ireland (£)*
372.3	431.4

[1] Average gross weekly earnings for adult full time employees whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence.

[2] Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings uses the median as its preferred measure of average earnings, however both median and mean measures are supplied as either may be suited to users' needs.

Data Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2004[2]

Tax Credits (Overpayment)

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of overpayment for child and working tax credit there have been in *(a)* Bassetlaw and *(b)* England in 2004. [203145]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

Bob Russell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of families have been overpaid working tax credit due to incorrect assessment by the Inland Revenue in each of the last two years. [202281]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Civil/Family Courts

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made in the development of new online services for the civil and family courts, with particular reference to *(a)* Possessions Claim Online and *(b)* online forms. [201909]

Mr. Leslie: Possession Claims Online (PCOL) will be a public facing service for the issue of county court claims for repossession of property due to arrears of rent or mortgage. Development of the new service started in October 2004. National Rollout is planned in two phases: the first will commence in early 2006, the second in mid 2006. The timings are subject to the evaluation of proving phases.

PCOL will provide benefits in a substantial area of civil business. These include the extension of the range of court services on line for claimants, defendants and advisers; reducing operational costs; creating two-way electronic channels whereby claimants, defendants, advisers, judiciary and court staff can share claims dates; and providing around the clock remote access for claimants, defendants and advisers.

The Online Forms Pilot Project is planned to go live in early 2005, subject to successful testing, which commences in mid- December. It will deliver a number of interactive civil court forms over the internet and allow the customers in nine geographically spread, pilot courts to complete them online, pay the court fee online, and submit the form online. The forms will have built-in validation and navigation together with online help to assist customers and provide real-time feedback, ensuring "right first time" submission of forms.

The aim of the project is to improve access to justice. It achieves this by enabling customers to carry out transactions electronically, including at locations where they can receive advice and help with form completion (e.g. Citizens' Advice Service), negating the need to attend court offices. Customers using Llangefni county court will be able to use Welsh versions of the forms.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been set aside for costs resulting from antisocial behaviour orders in the [201942]

Mr. Spellar: The Anti-social Behaviour Order (Northern Ireland) 2004 was made on 27 July 2004 and allows the three designated partners ie, the Police, Northern Ireland Housing Executive or a district council to apply for an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) to be made in respect of anyone aged 10 or over where the person has acted in a manner that has caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one of more persons not of the same household as himself; and that such an Order is necessary to protect relevant persons from further antisocial acts by that individual. Implementation guidelines are currently being drawn up by the Criminal Justice Directorate and the designated agencies.

In relation to funding for antisocial behaviour orders, it has been agreed that the costs of applying for an Order would be borne by the agency making the application within the first 12–18 months of the process and until such times as the true resource implications can be established. Evidence has shown that the costs of applying for an Order in England and Wales has reduced considerably as experience of the system has been gained.

Asthma

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he has taken to ensure that employees in the Province are protected from *(a)* asthma triggers at work and *(b)* causes of occupational asthma. [202026]

Mr. Gardiner: The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 requires employers to control exposure of employees and others to hazardous substances to prevent ill health, including occupational asthma. These Regulations are supported by a range of guidance materials and Approved Codes of Practice, one of which relates specifically to occupational asthma. Occupational asthma has been recognised as a significant cause of work-related ill health in the "Working for Health" strategy published in March 2003 and actions under the strategy are continuing to tackle this and other occupational health issues. A copy of this publication can be found in the House of Commons Library.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals developed asthma in the Province because they were exposed to dangerous substances at work in the last year for which figures are available. [202028]

Mr. Gardiner: Accurate information on the number of individuals that have developed asthma due to working conditions is not available for Northern Ireland. However, for information, latest figures from the Winter 2003–04 Labour Force Survey estimated that in the previous year 3,000[1] individuals suffered from breathing or lung problems that were caused or made worse by a job or work done in the past.

[1] This estimate is based on a small sample size and is therefore subject to a higher than usual degree of sampling variability. It should therefore be treated with caution.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [200876]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office has spent the following on accountancy services:

	£
2002–03	161,354
2003–04	103,748

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total external spending by his Department was on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200883]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The only Public Private Partnership (PPP) consultants employed by the Northern Ireland Office were for the 'Causeway Programme'.

In 2003–04.

The total external spending by the Department on public private partnership (PPP) consultants was £72,633.

There were eight full-time equivalent consultants employed.

There were 79 billed consultancy days that year.

The implied average cost of each PPP consultant was £3,394.10.

Two consultancy firms were used by the Department.

There were no PPP consultants employed in 2004–05.

Education Funding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implications for education funding of the results of the recent ruling regarding the educational entitlement of autism sufferer, Mr. Paul Murray. [202585]

Mr. Gardiner: The hon. Member will understand that I cannot comment on individual cases. However, in relation to children in Northern Ireland with special educational needs, it is the Education and Library Boards which are responsible under special education legislation for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making special educational provision for these children in their areas. This legislation does not give the Department of Education any role in the identification and assessment of children's special educational needs, nor any power to intervene in the process, which is intended to be conducted between parents, schools and boards.

It is the statutory responsibility of each board to manage costs within the budget allocated to it.

Education Underspend

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the underspend was for the Department of Education in cash terms in 2003–04; and what the projected underspend is in cash terms for the same Department in 2004–05. [203074]

Mr. Gardiner: Since the introduction of Resource Accounting and Budgeting arrangements from 2001–02, budgets and budgetary underspends have been on an accruals basis. Therefore underspend figures on a cash basis are not available for the years in question.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1635W.

Winter Fuel Payments

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to increase fuel poverty payments in line with recent fuel costs increases. [202892]

Mr. Spellar: The Government introduced winter fuel payments as part of their commitment to alleviate fuel poverty by providing help to older households towards their winter fuel bills. Older people are targeted because they are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather during the winter months than other groups. The Winter fuel payment is not intended to cover the total cost of a household's fuel bills, but to provide a significant contribution.

The winter fuel payment was £20 when it was first made in 1997–98. It was increased to £100 in 1999–2000 and to £200 in 2000–01. These increases are well above inflation. When the payment was increased to £200, the Chancellor announced that it would remain at that level for the remainder of this Parliament. An additional £100 for households with someone aged 80 or over was introduced from 2003–04.

This year the Government are also making a one-off, tax free, lump sum payment of £100 to all eligible households with someone aged 70 or over. This payment is intended to provide extra help with living expenses and pensioners are free to use the payment as they wish. In the majority of cases it will be paid along with this year's winter fuel payment.

Health and Safety

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what obligations employers in the Province have regarding surveillance of the health of their staff at work. [202027]

Mr. Gardiner: Employers have obligations under regulation 6 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 to ensure that their employees are provided with such health surveillance as is appropriate. The employer's risk assessment should identify the circumstances in which health surveillance is necessary, including those circumstances in which health surveillance is required by other specific health and safety regulations such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

Housing

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend those parts of the Housing Act 2004 relating to park homes to Northern Ireland. [202886]

Mr. Spellar: I have no plans to extend the provisions as they make amendments to the Mobile Homes Act 1983, which does not cover Northern Ireland.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to prevent the practice by tenants in receipt of housing benefit sub-letting the property to others who also claim housing benefit for the same address; and what estimate he has made of the scale of this problem in Northern Ireland. [202890]

Mr. Spellar: The practice of sub-letting part of a property can be legitimately undertaken in the social and private-rented sectors with the permission of the main landlord. If a property is sub-let with the landlord's permission housing benefit may be claimed by both of the approved tenants but only on their proportion of the rent and all such claims are assessed in accordance with the regulations. Where two claims are made from the same property they are automatically identified as "duplicate claims" and the apportionment of rent charged is thoroughly investigated before any payment of benefit is made. Where a tenant sublets the whole property, housing benefit would only be payable to the sub-tenant.

Details of the numbers of sub-tenants in receipt of housing benefit are not readily available.

Identity Cards

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to make identity cards an acceptable form of identification at polling stations in Northern Ireland. [202885]

Mr. Spellar: There are no plans to make any changes to the current list of specified documents a voter must produce in order to obtain a ballot paper at elections in Northern Ireland.

Ministerial Meetings

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many meetings have been held in the past 12 months between the Minister for Social Development and *(a)* Mr. Brian Rowntree, Chairman of the Housing Board, *(b)* Mr. Sidney McDowell, former Chairman of the Housing Board and *(c)* Mr. Paddy McIntyre, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. [202893]

Mr. Spellar: In the past 12 months I have formally met the past and present chairman of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as follows:

	Number of meetings
Mr. McDowell	1
Mr. Rowntree	2

During this period I have had four formal meetings with Mr. McIntyre.

Occupational Illness

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of working days lost in the Province as a result of occupational illness in each of the last three years. [202029]

Mr. Gardiner: Information on the number of working days lost as a result of occupational illness is not available for Northern Ireland.

However, for information, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) can be used to estimate the number of people that suffered from an illness in the previous year that was caused or made worse by a job or work done in the past. There are only two consistent estimates of this nature available from the LFS and they are as follows:

Number of people that suffered from a work-related illness in the previous year

Period (Winter)	*Number*
2001–02	49,000
2003–04	33,000

Public Expenditure Projects

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether Her Majesty's Treasury Green Book Appraisal and Evaluation in central Government standards has been adopted to evaluate public expenditure projects in Northern Ireland. [202888]

Mr. Pearson: Yes, Northern Ireland Departments are required to apply the principles of the HM Treasury Green Book when assessing policies, programmes and projects in receipt of public expenditure.

In addition the Department of Finance and Personnel has produced additional appraisal guidance to assist Northern Ireland Departments implement the requirements of the Green Book. The NI Practical Guide to the Green Book takes the requirements of the Green Book Guidance and tailors it specifically to the needs of NI Departments. All Accounting Officers have been informed of the publication of the NI Practical Guide, drawing attention to the latest developments and requirements.

Relationship and Sexuality Education

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what relationship and sexuality education is provided to school pupils in the Province. [202586]

Mr. Gardiner: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is included on a statutory basis in the NI Curriculum through the Science Programme of Study and the Health Education cross-curricular theme. The Department of Education has provided guidance to help schools in developing a policy on delivering a programme of RSE that is in harmony with the ethos of the school and appropriate to the level of maturity of their pupils.

RUC Reserve

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the Part-Time RUC Reserve were awarded the RUC Reserve Long Service Medal based solely on service to the RUC Reserve; and what the average length of service was of members of the Part-Time RUC Reserve since 1974. [202895]

Mr. Pearson: 1,048 members of the Part-Time RUC Reserve were awarded the Special Constabulary Long Service Medal, based on their service within the RUC Reserve.

The average length of service of members of the Part Time RUC is 4.8 years for those who joined between 1 January 1974 and left before 7 December 2004 and 18.65 years for members who joined after 1 January 1974 and who are still serving.

All members of the Part-Time Reserve who served for 18 months were also eligible for the RUC Service Medal.

Shankill Community Convention

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what Government support *(a)* has been and *(b)* will be given to the Shankill Community Convention, established as part of the Community Convention Pilot Schemes; and if he will make a statement. [202891]

Mr. Spellar: A letter of offer has been issued to the Greater Shankill Partnership for a grant of up to £33,000 to cover the costs of the Shankill Community Convention. This is the first of four planned pilots to take place in Protestant working class communities over the next 18 months. The community convention proposal came from elected representatives and community leaders and is part of a wider process of transformation within Protestant working class areas.

Tourism and Leisure Industry

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress on the Runkerry Golf Course, Hotel and Leisure project; and what representations he has received *(a)* in support of and *(b)* opposed to the project from (i) Moyle District Council, (ii) the National Trust and (iii) Northern Ireland Tourist Board. [202308]

Angela Smith: The Department is still considering the application for this major proposal close to the Giant's Causeway World Heritages site. The proposal raises complex planning policy issues, particularly the impact on the setting of the World Heritage site. The Department's Environmental Heritage Service is strongly opposed to the proposal. Environmental considerations need to be balanced against the tourist and other economic benefits of the proposal. Additional information has been requested from the applicant. Once received the Department will deal with this application as expeditiously as possible.

(I) Moyle District Council

The Council supports this application as it considers that the provision of these facilities will add considerably to the tourism assets of the Causeway Coast and wider area.

(II) The National Trust

The National Trust objects to the proposed development and has requested that the application be refused. Its major concern with the application is the affect on the setting of the Giants Causeway World Heritage site which is substantially under custodianship of the National Trust.

(III) Northern Ireland Tourist Board. (NITB)

NITB supports this proposal on condition that it satisfies all the other relevant planning and conservation criteria including that there is no threat of any adverse impact on the World Heritage site.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many jobs are on waiting lists for *(a)* insulation measures and *(b)* heating systems to be fitted under the Warm Homes Scheme managed by the Eaga Partnership, broken down by constituency. [202847]

Mr. Spellar: The information is as follows:

Constituency	*Homes waiting for insulation measures*	*Homes waiting for heating measures*
Belfast, East	2	32
Belfast, North	11	53
Belfast, South	14	26
Belfast, West	12	28
East Antrim	8	51
East Londonderry	3	21
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5	31
Foyle	8	12
Lagan Valley	5	12
Mid Ulster	18	6
Newry and Armagh	6	4
North Antrim	1	69
North Down	14	40
South Antrim	57	82
South Down	8	20
Strangford	9	20
West Tyrone	12	12
Total	193	519

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps *(a)* have been taken and *(b)* will be taken by the Department for Social Development to increase the number of people making use of the Warm Homes Scheme managed by the Eaga Partnership in those areas where uptake has been lowest. [202849]

Mr. Spellar: The Department is keen to ensure that all those eligible for assistance under the Warm Homes Scheme are fully aware of their entitlement and can access the scheme with the minimum amount of bureaucracy. For this reason management of the scheme has been passed to Eaga Partnership, which has been working with a variety of organisations across the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to ensure that Warm Homes information is passed on to those most vulnerable and who may be eligible for the grant. This activity includes a variety of methods including local press releases, information sessions for community groups, training sessions for healthcare professionals and targeted mail shots. Time is also spent briefing MLAs and local authorities on Warm Homes,

discussing local approaches to promote the Scheme in individual areas where uptake may be low and performance statistics generally.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received concerning Part P of Building Regulations due to come into effect on 1 January 2005. [R] [202118]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a public consultation document on proposals for Part P in May 2002 and received 490 responses from bodies such as trade associations, safety organisations, local authorities, individual electrical contractors and members of the public. Since that time the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received a large number of letters seeking clarification on detailed points.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the insurance industry on the implementation of part P of the Building Regulations from 1 January 2005. [R] [202123]

Phil Hope: Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have had discussions with the Financial Services Authority, the Association of British Insurers and a number of insurance brokers and underwriters.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* plans he has and *(b)* action he has taken to introduce competent person schemes, other than that concerning electrical safety, into building regulations. [R] [202124]

Phil Hope: There are currently four other authorised schemes which began operation on 1 April 2002: FENSA for replacement glazing, CORGI for the installation of heat-producing gas appliances, OFTEC for the installation of oil-fired combustion appliances and HETAS for the installation of solid fuel combustion appliances. A number of applications to run schemes, mostly in the plumbing, heating, ventilating and air-conditioning sectors, are under consideration.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what preparations he has made for the process of monitoring electricians for six months to ensure their competence in compliance with part P of Building Regulations after 1 January 2005; and what the cost has been. [R] [202127]

Phil Hope: Electricians who are registered with a competent person scheme will be monitored by their scheme operators, with at least one initial on-site inspection and a further inspection within the first year of membership. This cost is covered by the annual membership fee of a competent person scheme.

Those not registered with a scheme will be monitored by the building control body for all notifiable electrical installation work. The cost of this monitoring is included in the building control fee paid.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has held with interested groups concerning part P of Building Regulations due to come into effect on 1 January 2005. [R] [202131]

Phil Hope: Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have had many discussions over the past four years with bodies including electrical safety organisations, electrical trade associations, the electrical trade press, potential competent person scheme operators, Government Departments, the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales, the Health and Safety Executive, the Office of Fair Trading, the insurance industry and local authorities.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely impact of part P of Building Regulations on the cost to the consumer of hiring an electrician. [R] [202132]

Phil Hope: Where a householder employs an electrician who is a member of a competent person scheme the extra cost should be minimal. Where the electrician is not a member of such a scheme the extra cost will be the amount of the building control fee payable. The regulatory impact assessment for part P showed that the extra costs were fully justified by the reduction in deaths, injuries and fires form defective fixed electrical installations.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will amend part P of the Building Regulations to exempt people with significant practical experience of fitting electrical installations from the self-certification regime. [R] [202133]

Phil Hope: No. The purpose of self-certification schemes is to assess the competence of members of the scheme to ensure that they are sufficiently competent to self-certify their own work without having to submit a building notice to the local authority.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202460]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's target in 2004–05 for replying to hon. Members and letters received directly from members of the public is 15 working days.

Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament/Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library of the House.

Council Tax

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister over how many months of a year council tax payers may pay their council tax *(a)* by standing order and *(b)* direct debit; and if he will make a statement. [202058]

Mr. Raynsford: Regulation 21 and schedule 1 of the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 (SI 1992/613) provide that billing authorities can offer a scheme of 10 instalments, but also allow them to offer greater frequencies up to 52 instalments if they wish. Billing authorities can also make individual agreements with taxpayers which set out payment dates and the amount of each instalment. The regulations do not specify which payments methods

authorities must offer. It is for individual billing authorities to decide whether to offer other frequencies and which payment methods to offer and promote in the light of local circumstances.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the estimate of average council tax per dwelling in England in 2004–05 of £967 includes a measure of the effect of council tax benefit in reducing the amount of council tax paid. [202290]

Mr. Raynsford: No. The figure of £967 per dwelling is the average before the effect of council tax benefit is taken into account.

Departmental Telephones

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their own personal use relating to *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international calls; and if he will make a statement. [201021]

Phil Hope: Staff in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are allowed to make occasional and reasonable use of official telephones for personal reasons. Automatic logs are kept of all calls and regular reviews carried out. Access to all international numbers is only granted to staff who have a business need.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [202454]

Phil Hope: None of the properties owned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its agencies have been empty in the last two years.

Information relating to non-departmental public bodies with their own land holding powers is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202468]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many departmental mobile telephones were used by *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202760]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. Since then the number of mobile phones used by Ministers and Special Advisers, and the associated costs (including purchase, line rental, and call charges) are as follows:

	Number of mobile phones used	*Cost (£)*
30 May 2002 to 31 March 2003	3	2,071
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	6	3,756
1 April 2004 to 30 November 2004	6	2,600

The number of these lost and stolen, and the cost of replacement, is as follows:

	Number lost	*Number stolen*	*Cost of replacement (£)*
30 May 2002 to 31 March 2003	0	1	213.56
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	1	0	82
1 April 2004 to 30 September 2004	1	0	82

Information on mobile phones used by officials is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff there are within each of the Groups/ Directorates within the ODPM. [200960]

Phil Hope: The following table sets out the number of staff in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by Group and Directorate, as at 31 October 2004.

Group	*Number of staff*
Sustainable Communities Group:	523
Tackling Disadvantage Group	273
Homelessness Directorate	68
NRU	152
SEU	53
Local Government and Fire Group	561
Equality and Diversity Unit	17
Fire Service	244
Local Government	300
Regional Development Group	87
Regional Co-ordination Unit	36
Ministerial	66
Corporate Strategy and Resources Group	655
Corporate Strategy and Resources	523
Analytical Services Directorate	132
Communication	76
Legal	64
Chief Scientists Office	2
Total	2,307
Government Office Network	1,002
The Fire Service College	241
The Planning Inspectorate	784
The QEII Conference Centre	56
Residential Property Tribunal Service	77
Grand Total	4,467

East of England Regional Chamber

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget of the East of England Regional Chamber was in each of the last two years; and what its source was. [202020]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister made a grant of £1,874,000 to the East of England Regional Chamber in the 2003–04 financial year and £2,112,000 in 2004–05. The Regional Chamber may also derive additional revenue from other sources including members' subscription.

Fire Control Centres

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate when the location of 95 per cent. of calls will be available to fire control centre staff. [202746]

Mr. Raynsford: Control room staff currently determine the location of the caller by asking suitable questions. Facilities to automatically locate the caller to the control room operator form part of the FiReControl project which will deliver a network of resilient regional control centres. Currently this is scheduled for completion in early 2009.

Government Office for London

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by the Government Office for London in each year from 2000; and what the forecast is for 2005. [202002]

Phil Hope: The Government Office for London staffing figures from 2000 are as follows:

As at April:	*Number*	*FTE*
2000	370	[2]—
2001	240	236
2002	260	256
2003	288	285
2004	325	320
2005	325	[1]320

[1] This is an estimate. GOL staffing may change in 2005, but it is difficult to predict accurately as decisions on future workstreams for government offices have yet to be made by central departments
[2] No data held.

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the running costs for the Government Office for London were in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the forecast is for 2005–06. [202003]

Phil Hope: Government Office for London (GOL) running cost (admin) expenditure is as follows:

	£ million
2003–04	[1]16.7
2004–05	[2]18.6
2005–06	[3]17.3

[1] Total yearly spend.
[2] Projected forecast for the year as at November 2004.
[3] Notified budget.

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the real terms change in the total programmes budget of the Government Office for London was in each year between 2001–02 and 2004–05; and what the projected change is for 2005–06. [202004]

Phil Hope: Government Office for London (GOL) programme budget/expenditure changes are as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	[1]2,094
2002–03	[1]2,530
2003–04	[2]2,711
2004–05	[2]3,027
2005–06	[3]—

[1] Outturn.
[2] Budget.
[3] Budget not yet known.

GOL centralised its Programme management information in 2003–04. The outturn figures reflect spend in 2001–02 and 2002–03—as there is not a centralised record of Programme budgets dating back to 2001–02. The 2003–04 and 2004–05 figures reflect Programme allocations. Information on the 2005–06 Programme budgets is not yet available.

Housing

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will break down the low cost home ownership units planned for Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea in the Housing Corporation's 2004–06 Approved Developed Programme by *(a)* one-bed, *(b)* two-bed, *(c)* three-bed and *(d)* four-bed or more; [201964]

(2) if he will break down the low cost home ownership units planned for Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea in the Housing Corporation's 2004–06 Approved Developed Programme by *(a)* conventional shared ownership, *(b)* Do-It-Yourself shared ownership, *(c)* Homebuy and *(d)* other forms of low cost home ownership. [201965]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation have so far allocated resources to fund a total of 52 shared ownership dwellings in Westminster, and 43 in Kensington and Chelsea over the years 2004–06. Homebuy replaced Do-It-Yourself shared ownership schemes in the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme in 1999.

Homebuy (other than new-build Homebuy) is allocated via Zone Agents to the sub-regions of London.

The north Sub-region, including Westminster, Islington, Haringey, Enfield, Camden and Barnet, has allocated 155 Homebuy, and 296 Keyworker Homebuy (including 100 higher value equity loans specifically for teachers with potential for leadership). The West sub-region, including Kensington and Chelsea, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Harrow, Hammersmith and Fulham, Baling, and Brent, has allocated 296 Keyworker Homebuy (including 100 higher value equity loans specifically for teachers with potential for leadership).

Other forms of low-cost Home Ownership enable tenants to buy their rented home. They are the Right to Acquire, which is demand-led; and the Voluntary Purchase Grant, of which none are planned in Westminster or Kensington and Chelsea.

The table shows the split of low cost homeownership schemes by one, two, three and four or more bedrooms for each authority in London and has been made available in the Library of the House. The figures for Homebuy Market Purchase, allocated by Zone Agent to the sub-regions, cannot be broken down by bedroom numbers until the individual properties are purchased.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* average, *(b)* greatest and *(c)* smallest proportion of tenants on the arms length management company is where a housing stock transfer has been achieved using an arms length management company. [202299]

Keith Hill: Councils who set up an arms length management organisation (ALMO) to manage their housing stock retain ownership of the properties and no stock transfer is involved. Most ALMO boards are made up of one third tenants, one third local authority nominees and one third independent members. No ALMO boards have less than one third tenant members. One ALMO board has a tenant majority, with 11 tenants, five local authority nominees and five independent members. However, this is an exception, agreed because the ALMO was created from a Tenant Management Organisation which formerly managed the council's stock.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has given to councils seeking housing stock transfers to an arms length management company (ALMC) on the proportion of *(a)* tenants and *(b)* nominees on the Board of the ALMC; and if he will make a statement. [202300]

Keith Hill: Councils who set up an arms length management organisation (ALMO) to manage their housing stock retain ownership of the properties and no stock transfer is involved. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Guidance on Arms Length Management of Local Authority Housing", published in October 2004, sets out that the board should include tenants, local authority nominees and independent members. It does not specify proportions, but makes it clear that no one group should normally be in a majority.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many shared ownership properties were sold in Southwark in each year since 1997; and how many of those properties were purchased by someone who was *(a)* already in social housing in that area, *(b)* on the single housing register in that area and *(c)* a key worker. [202969]

Keith Hill: A table containing this information for every local authority in England has been made available in the Library of the House.

The table includes, for each financial year from 1997–08 to 2003–04 and for every English local authority and Government Office Region:

the number of Shared Ownership sales;

how many Shared Ownership sales were to people who were previously social tenants in the area;

how many Shared Ownership sales were to people who were registered on a local authority waiting list/common housing register.

Note that the figures relate to the sales of initial shares only. Subsequent purchases of additional equity are not included.

It should be noted that figures on the number of key workers that bought Shared Ownership properties during the period 1997–08 to 2003–04 are not available. This is because the purchaser's occupation was not collected as part of CORE Sales during this period.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made of the financial effects of changes to the retirement ages of members of the Local Government Pension Scheme; and if he will make a statement. [200498]

Phil Hope: Amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997, designed to mitigate employers' future costs by approximately £200 million per year from 2005–06, are programmed to come into force on 1 April 2005.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to provide protectors under planning procedures for *(a)* special landscape areas and *(b)* areas of outstanding natural beauty with regard to the erectors of new mobile phone masts; and if he will make a statement. [203019]

Keith Hill: Current planning guidance on electronic communications is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). The general policy is to facilitate the growth of electronic communications systems while protecting the environment. This includes national policies for the protection of the countryside and residential areas, in particular our National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, conservation areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The installation of any communications mast in such areas, is subject to a full planning application. Any such application will be decided by the local planning authority (or the Secretary of State, my right. hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on appeal) in the light of development plan policies and any other material considerations, including any relevant representations either for or against the proposal.

Planning

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the current average waiting time is between the making of a planning appeal and the announcement of the outcome; what action is being taken to reduce waiting times; and what sanction is being applied to the Planning Inspectorate for failure to meet its targets. [203079]

Keith Hill: The current average waiting time, for planning appeals determined in October, was 30 weeks; for appeals submitted in October the appellants can expect to receive a decision in about 52 weeks.

To help reduce waiting times the government has allocated additional resources to the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspectorate's Chief Executive has set up a task force to tackle the backlog of appeals, to help improve productivity and to find ways of reducing the demands that are made for the Inspectorate's services.

Rather than sanctions for failing to meet targets, the Inspectorate, and its Chief Executive, are to be congratulated on the way they have managed to deal with the recent growth in the number of appeals. In the period to 31 October 2004 receipts were 21 per cent. more than in the same period last year (i.e. to 31 October 2003). Receipts in the period to 31 October 2003 were themselves 10 per cent. more than in the period to 31 October 2002.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the financial effects on *(a)* business and *(b)* UK competitiveness of delays in processing planning appeals and planning inquiries. [203089]

Keith Hill: The Government recognise that delays in planning decisions add to costs for all parties. It is committed to addressing the delays in processing planning appeals which have resulted from the sharp rise in the numbers of appeals received over the last two years. There has been no detailed estimate made of the economic cost caused by such delays.

Planning Regulations (Noise Levels)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will include the decibel level of amplified calls to prayer as a criterion under planning regulations; and if he will make a statement. [201799]

Keith Hill: Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 on Planning and Noise outlines the considerations to be taken into account in determining planning applications for development which will either generate or be exposed to existing noise sources. The guidance states that noise impacts can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

A local planning authority may impose planning conditions which could specify a limit of new noise sources. The guidance does not set noise limits for any particular type of development and there are no plans to specify the decibel level of amplified calls to prayer in planning guidance.

Of course, such conditions can only be imposed on new developments. Complaints about noise from pre-existing sources would have to be dealt with by a local authority under the regulations for statutory noise nuisance. These regulations are the responsibility of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Research Projects

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the research projects commissioned by his Department since June 2001; who was commissioned to undertake each project; and what the total cost of each project was. [201957]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created in May 2002. Since then, the majority of the information requested is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Research Management Database. This can be accessed via the public interface on the internet at: www.rmd.odpm.gov.uk/programmes.asp

The only projects not included are in the Civil Resilience research programme and these are listed as follows. They are to be added to the Research Management *Database in December 2004*

Civil Resilience Research

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down

Research to inform the preparation of guidance on the decontamination of buildings and infrastructure following a CBRN incident—£61,000.

National Radiological Protection Board, Chilton

Briefing on current knowledge with regard to decontamination of buildings and infrastructures after dispersion of radioactive material—£7,000.

Building Research Establishment

Development of precautions to minimise effects of a CBRN event on buildings and infrastructures—£100,000.

National Chemical Emergency Centre

Scoping study to define requirements for the development of decision making support tools for HAZMAT incidents—£29,000.

Health Safety Laboratory

Effectiveness of casualty showering as a decontamination process for CBRN incidents—£24k

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down

Testing of protective ensembles—£400,000.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201396]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Office's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201457]

Phil Hope: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Sport and Recreation

Kate Hoey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authorities have placed their sports facilities within a charitable trust. [201855]

Mr. Caborn: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is not held centrally by Government.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200396]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff but which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200416]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established on 29 May 2002. To date no project commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister via the training framework has been withdrawn and no penalty has been incurred.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Embargo (China)

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government support the lifting of the arms embargo on China; and if she will make a statement. [200368]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) today (UIN 200354).

British Energy

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when her Department agreed to a three month extension to the financial restructuring support agreements for British Energy; until what date the extension will run; what its value is; and if she will place in the Library a copy of the extension agreement. [202810]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The extension of the backstop date in the Government Restructuring Agreement from 31 January 2005 until 30 April 2005 was agreed to in, and put into effect by, a letter dated 29 November 2004. I have placed a copy of that letter in the Library of the House. As explained in the written statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 28–30WS, the Department granted the extension as the best means of ensuring the Government's overarching objectives of safety, security of supply and value for money for the taxpayer. No further drawings can, of course, be made on the Credit Facility Agreement following the European Commission's decision to approve the Government's restructuring aid to British Energy on 22 September 2004.

Business Links

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is taking to enable Business Links to continue to deliver all the services they currently deliver after 1 April 2005 when they will no longer be able to claim full recovery of VAT on their services. [202052]

Nigel Griffiths: The Small Business Service is supporting Business Link Operators and the Regional Development Agencies, which from April 2005 will be responsible for Business Link services in their region, as they work through the implications on VAT recovery on future BL service delivery.

Under the Business Link transformation programme, Business Link branded activity will be moved increasingly toward the delivery of information, diagnostic and brokerage services. However, these services will only represent one aspect of the licensed operators overall activities and consequently the VAT implications will vary across different BL licensed organisations depending on the mix of their overall activities.

BLOs have still to provide the information to enable an assessment of the impact of irrecoverable VAT on service delivery.

Business Support Initiatives

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many people have visited her Department's website promoting Access to Business Practice; and what other material is available as part of this business support product; [200526]

(2) what the uptake has been of each Support to Implement Best Practice in each region; and if she will make a statement; [200525]

(3) what the take-up has been in each region in the current financial year of *(a)* Access to Best Business Practice and *(b)* Support to Implement Best Business Practice; and if she will make a statement. [200599]

Nigel Griffiths: Regional take-up of the Access product is not recorded. However from 1 April 2004 to 31 October 2004 there have been over 300,000 visits to the Access to Best Practice pages on the DTI's website. During this period 100,000 hard copy publications have been ordered and dispatched. In October alone there were 50,000 downloads of electronic documents from the site. Information on the site is grouped under a number of key themes: Management; Operations; Sales and Marketing; People; Design and Innovation; and Communications and IT. There are over 300 downloadable documents on the website covering aspects of business best practice as well as case studies. The website also provides a range of on-line self-assessment tools.

Since the release of the Support to Implement Best Business Practice product in April 2004 until week ending 27 November 2004 some 1,956 in-depth diagnostics had been undertaken. The regional breakdown is as follows.

	Number
East	191
East Midlands	92
London	284
North East	12
North West	347

	Number
South East	226
South West	339
West Midlands	278
Yorkshire and Humberside	187

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with what financial support products UK Trade and Investment assists UK businesses. [200559]

Mr. Alexander: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) products which offer an element of financial assistance to companies include: Passport to Export; Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad (SESA); and Export Marketing Research Scheme (EMRS). Core UKTI services, however, also include a range of free or subsidised products, aimed at boosting UK business competitiveness.

Carbon Emissions

Mr. Bailey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the carbon emission levels were *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* in other EU member states at the latest date for which figures are available. [200229]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The following table contains carbon emission levels published by Eurostat. 2002 is the latest year for which figures are available for European member states.

Note that these figures reflect the fact that the economies of some states are larger than others and not necessarily the extent to which they take steps to reduce the generation of emissions.

Country	Carbon emissions in 2002 (million tonnes)
Germany	235.7
United Kingdom	146.6
Italy	127.9
France	110.7
Spain	88.8
Poland	86.7
Netherlands	48.2
Belgium	34.5
Czech Republic	33.6
Greece	28.8
Austria	19.0
Finland	19.0
Portugal	18.4
Hungary	15.6
Sweden	14.9
Denmark	14.8
Ireland	12.5
Slovak Republic	11.8
Estonia	4.7
Slovenia	4.5
Lithuania	3.3
Luxembourg	2.8
Latvia	2.0
Malta	0.7
Cyprus	n/a

These figures exclude land use change and forestry. The latest published UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory figure for 2002 is 150.3 million tonnes of carbon including land use change and forestry.

Combined Heat and Power

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support her Department is making available to encourage micro combined heat and power generation. [200651]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* I have been asked to reply:

The Department sponsors the Carbon Trust, who are conducting field trials of micro-CHP units to better understand their potential energy and carbon savings. Our proposal for the Energy Efficiency Commitment 2005–08 includes an incentive for innovative technologies, such as micro-CHP with a electrical capacity of up to 50 kilowatts. This year the Chancellor announced the possibility of widening the Budget 2002 VAT reduction on some micro-CHP installations. The Government are also formulating a strategy for microgeneration, with input from Defra.

Electricity Blackouts

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the possibility of electricity blackouts due to a lack of gas this winter. [201589]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* Gas supplies are likely to be tighter this winter than in previous years. This is mainly due to the long-term decline of production from the North sea.

However, National Grid Transco's assessment in their "Winter Outlook Report" published by Ofgem on 20 October, is that supplies of gas, including for electricity generation, can be maintained from the UK Continental Shelf, gas imports, storage and demand management where necessary, even in a winter of a severity expected only once every 50 years.

Electricity Generation (Renewables)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to increase the amount of electricity generated by renewable sources; and if she will make a statement. [203072]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government's main mechanism for supporting renewable energy is the Renewables Obligation. Electricity supply companies are required to source a percentage of their electricity sales (increasing each year) from eligible sources. The Obligation for the 2004–05 period is 4.9 per cent. It will remain in place until 2027.

The RO is supported by around £500 million of spending between 2002–08 to help develop emerging technologies. This will take the form of spending on R and D and funding for capital grants. This includes among other things grants of £117 million for offshore wind, over £60 million for energy crops and biomass, £31 million for PV and £12.5 million for community schemes. In August 2004 it was announced that a special £50 million Marine Renewables Development Fund would be set up to help bridge the funding gap between pre-commercial and supported commercial technologies.

Renewable energy is also exempt from the Climate Change Levy (a tax on non-domestic energy use disaggregated by fuel type). For renewably generated electricity this adds £4.3/MWh of support.

EU Competitiveness Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times she has *(a)* attended and *(b)* been absent from meetings of the EU Competitiveness Council since 2001; and which ministers attended in her absence on each occasion. [200956]

Mr. Alexander: The following table outlines DTI ministerial attendance at Competitiveness Council meetings since it was established in 2002.

Date	*Attendee(s)*
30 September 2002	Melanie Johnson (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Competition, Consumers and Markets)
14 November 2002	Melanie Johnson
26 November 2002	Patricia Hewitt (Secretary of State for Trade and Industry), Lord Sainsbury of Turville (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Science and Innovation) and Iain Gray (Scottish Executive Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning)
3 March 2003	Patricia Hewitt
13 May 2003	Alan Johnson (Minister of State for Employment Relations, Industry and the Regions)
19 May 2003	Alan Johnson
22 September 2003	Lord Sainsbury of Turville
10 November 2003	Jacqui Smith (Minister of State for Industry and the Regions and Deputy Minister for Women and Equality) and Andy Kerr (Scottish Executive Minister for Finance and Public Services)
26–27 November 2003	Patricia Hewitt and Jacqui Smith
3 December 2003	No Minister [Anne Lambert (Deputy Permanent Representative) attended. Only one item debated.]
11 March 2004	Patricia Hewitt
17–18 May 2004	Jacqui Smith
24 September 2004	Patricia Hewitt
25–26 November 2004	Patricia Hewitt and Lord Sainsbury of Turville

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much cover was made by the Export Credits Guarantee Department to *(a)* Nepal, *(b)* Zimbabwe, *(c)* Nigeria, *(d)* Rwanda, *(e)* Sierra Leone, *(f)* South Africa, *(g)* Pakistan, *(h)* Mozambique, *(i)* Zambia, *(j)* China, *(k)* Ethiopia, *(l)* Kenya, *(m)* Malawi, *(n)* Uganda, *(o)* Ghana, *(p)* Bangladesh, *(q)* India and *(r)* Tanzania in the last two years for which figures are available. [200933]

Mr. Alexander: The following table shows the value of issued guarantees on these specified markets at current exchange rates, during the last two full financial years. (Zero values shown where applicable):

£

Market	*2002-03*	*2003-04*
Bangladesh	8,410,073	6,237,569
China	31,074,304	13,468,853
Ghana	0	0
Ethiopia	0	0
India	76,970,096	67,497,505
Kenya	0	0
Malawi	0	0
Mozambique	0	0
Nepal	0	0
Nigeria	138,823,252	0
Pakistan	0	0
Rwanda	0	0
Sierra Leone	0	0
South Africa	82,693,692	139,882,828
Tanzania United Republic of	0	2,129,291
Uganda	0	0
Zambia	0	0
Zimbabwe	202,500	202,500
Total	338,173,917	229,418,546

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications for cover from Kellogg, Brown and Root the Export Credits Guarantee Department has considered since October 2003. [201117]

Mr. Alexander: ECGD has received one formal application for cover from Kellogg, Brown and Root, as well as an additional application from its subsidiary, Granherne.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the guarantees issued to subsidiaries of Halliburton by the Export Credits Guarantee Department since 1 January 2003; and on what dates they were issued. [201118]

Mr. Alexander: The only ECGD guarantee issued in connection with the business of a Halliburton subsidiary since 2003 relates to Kellogg, Brown and Root's application for oilfield services contracts for the Alibekmola field in Kazakhstan. ECGD's Offer of Cover was issued on 8 September 2004 and accepted on 3 November 2004.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons her Department and the Export Credits Guarantee Department revised the anti-corruption procedures brought into force on 1 May. [201119]

Mr. Alexander: The procedures were revised to take account of concerns expressed by customers and their representative trade associations about the practicality of some aspects of the procedures.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications for cover from M. W. Kellogg the Export Credits Guarantee Department has considered since October 2003. [201122]

Mr. Alexander: None.

Fur Imports

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the amount of cat and dog fur being imported into *(a)* the UK and

(b) other EU states; if she will make it her policy to ban such imports into the UK; and if she will make a statement. [200975]

Mr. Alexander: Establishing whether domestic cat or dog fur is entering the UK is difficult because any such fur entering the UK and other EU states would fall under the commodity codes for "other fur" which includes rabbit, musk-rat and beaver. It is not possible to identify what proportion of the "other fur" figure, if any, represents domestic dog or cat fur. Figures for fur imports into the UK were given in my answer to my hon. Friend's question on 13 July 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1020–24W.

The Government are committed to establishing the facts about this issue and to taking practical and proportionate action in response. The Government invited interested stakeholders to come forward with evidence that domestic dog and cat fur is on sale in the UK. No hard evidence has been provided to us. The Government therefore cannot support an import ban at this time.

A full update will be made in a written statement in the new year, "other fur".

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has held with *(a)* EU member state Governments and *(b)* others, over the importation of cat and dog fur. [200976]

Mr. Alexander: This year, the Department has written to all official contacts in member states to update them on the UK position on domestic cat and dog fur. We continue to raise this issue in dialogue with the EU Commission and we maintain particularly close contacts with officials from Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.

The Department also liaise with interested stakeholders from the NGO and the business community.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment she has made of the accuracy of scientific testing to determine whether products contain *(a)* cat and *(b)* dog fur; and if she will make a statement. [200977]

Mr. Alexander: The DTI has been working with the Laboratory of Government Chemist Limited (LGC) to establish a scientific test which can readily determine between different species of fur. As reported by the then Minister for Trade and Investment, the hon. Member for East Ham (Mr. Timms) in a written statement to the House on 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 11–12WS, the first test trialled was unsatisfactory because industrial processing of fur tends to destroy its DNA. LGC Limited went on to test a technology which requires less DNA. Initial tests were disappointing but suggested that this method should not be discounted. During the course of this year, we understand the methodology has been refined and I have commissioned work to test the method again to establish whether its reliability has improved. I will report on the results of these tests in a written statement to the House in the new year.

Hidden Charges

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans the Government have to introduce restrictions on hidden charges imposed by secondary lenders which apply when the borrower falls into arrears. [201504]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Consumer Credit (Agreements)(Amendment) Regulations 2004 require that from 31 May 2005 all lenders must provide detail on arrears charges under the heading "Key Information" up front in the credit agreement form. The Consumer Credit (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2004 also require that, from the same date, these charges are flagged in pre contract information that must be given to the consumer to assist them shop around for the best deals. In addition, as part of the Consumer Credit Bill, we intend to introduce requirements for all lenders to provide annual statements and notices about fees and charges. This will mean that borrowers will be aware of the state of their accounts throughout the life of their loan.

Internet

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she intends to take to protect the public from the unwanted installation of premium rate dialler programmes on computers connected to the internet; and if she will make a statement. [201873]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The Department has asked the communications regulator the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to review the role and powers of ICSTIS in premium rate regulation in view of the consumer harm caused by fraudulent dial-up internet scams. Ofcom is due to report back shortly.

Joint and Several Liability

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations she has received on amending the law on joint and several liability in construction cases in so far as it affects consulting engineers; and what discussions she has had with other Departments on this matter; [202303]

(2) if she will make it her policy to amend the law on joint and several liability in construction cases to ensure that defendants' liability is limited to a fair proportion of the plaintiff's loss, having regard to the relative degree of blame. [202304]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* My right hon. Friend has received representations from the Association of Consulting Engineers and individual consulting engineering practices. The Government have no plans to amend the law on joint and several liability in construction cases.

Liquidations/Bankruptcies

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* company compulsory liquidations and *(b)* personal bankruptcies there were in each quarter since Q4 2003, broken down by region. [200546]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Table 1 records the number of company compulsory liquidations in England and Wales by region classified according to groupings of Official Receivers' Offices from Q4 2003 to Q3 2004.

Table 2 records the number of bankruptcies in England and Wales by region classified according to groupings of Official Receivers' Offices from Q4 2003 to Q3 2004.

Table 1: Company Compulsory Liquidations by regions classified according to groupings of Official Receivers Offices Q4 2003 to Q3 2004

	2003 Q4	2004 Q1	2004 Q2	2004 Q3
Anglia Region	118	166	146	128
London (incl. PIU London)	267	302	311	262
Midlands Region	151	142	154	132
North East Region	113	114	125	124
North West Region	162	153	148	127
South East Region	192	221	181	182
South West Region	101	110	132	105
England and Wales Total	1,104	1,208	1,197	1,060

Table 2: Personal bankruptcies by regions classified according to groupings of Official Receivers Offices Q4 2003 to Q3 2004

	2003 Q4	2004 Q1	2004 Q2	2004 Q3
Anglia Region	1,093	1,300	1,335	1,329
London (incl. PIU London)	543	649	1,167	1,251
Midlands Region	1,034	1,260	1,218	1,194
North East Region	1,106	1,348	1,375	1,447
North West Region	890	1,223	1,161	1,185
South East Region	1,167	1,395	1,413	1,427
South West Region	1,107	1,349	1,391	1,482
England and Wales Total	6,940	8,524	9,060	9,315

Mersey Docks and Harbour Company

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government retain a golden share in the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. [202723]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

No, the Government have held no shares in the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company since 1998.

Miners' Compensation Schemes

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many contracts the Department holds with Capita in relation to the miners' compensation schemes; what the nature of each contract is; and how long each contract is set to run. [199518]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department holds a Claims Handling Contract with Capita/IRISC, which expires on 31 July 2006, and the Vibration White Finger Services medical assessments contract with Capita Health Services, which expires on 31 March 2005. The Department has a two years option on this contract, which it plans to exercise.

Minimum Wage

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are being taken to prevent companies paying their staff below the minimum wage. [201497]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Inland Revenue is responsible for enforcing compliance with the national minimum wage. Its minimum wage compliance officers respond to complaints about underpayment and take action to ensure that the appropriate minimum rates, and any arrears of wages due, are paid to the worker. The Inland other sources, for risk assessment purposes and make proactive visits to employers to help improve compliance with the minimum wage. In the Low Pay Commission's last full report (March 2003) they concluded that most employers continue to comply with the minimum wage and the evidence they received welcomed the Inland Revenue's work in enforcing it.

It is of course important that workers and employers are aware of their rights and obligations under the minimum wage. My Department, in partnership with the Inland Revenue, run a publicity campaign every autumn which advises on the minimum rates including any increases to help ensure workers are aware of their rights and employers of their obligations under the minimum wage legislation. Independent research commissioned after the 2002 campaign showed that awareness of the minimum wage by employers and low-paid workers was at almost universal levels.

Mobile Phone Companies

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which mobile phone companies have signed up to the 10 commitments; and what discussions she has held with those that have not. [203118]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: There are a total of five mobile phone companies who operate mobile phone networks in the UK. These are Vodafone, Orange, O2, T-Mobile and "3". All five have signed up to the "10 Commitments".

Ofgem

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to review the offshore licensing regime for gas producers operating on the UK

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I keep the offshore petroleum licensing regime under continuous review. However, I have no plans to extend Ofgem's powers in this area.

Premium Rate Telephone Industry

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has *(a)* to review and *(b)* to amend the regulation of the premium rate telephone industry. [201827]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has asked the communications regulator the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to review the role and powers of ICSTIS in premium rate regulation. Ofcom is due to report back shortly. I will consider Ofcom's recommendations, and the Department will be involved in implementing them.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the aggregate cost to business of regulations imposed by her Department since 1997, based on figures in the relevant regulatory impact assessments. [202009]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* All proposals which impact on business, charities or the voluntary sector require a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) which includes details of the costs, benefits and risks of the proposal. RIAs are subject to public consultation and copies of final RIAs are available from the Libraries of the House and on departmental websites.

Religious Festivals

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will bring forward proposals to mark the important festivals of minority communities, with particular reference to Eid and Divali, with *(a)* public holidays and *(b)* other official recognition. [201494]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government receive a variety of suggestions for new or different bank holidays and celebrations. Bank and public holidays in Great Britain do not, by tradition, commemorate particular individuals, events, or institutions, other than those associated with Christmas and Easter. The present pattern of bank holidays in the United Kingdom is well established and accepted, and the Government have no current plans to change the arrangements. Although the Government do not get involved in contractual matters between employers and employees with regards to taking time off, our policy is to encourage employers to respond flexibly to such requests for leave bearing in mind business needs.

In addition, the Government already mark religious festivals from a variety of minority faiths in different ways and will continue to do so in the future. Ministers and senior officials attend receptions and events where possible and also send messages of good will and celebratory cards in some instances.

Renewable Energy

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what sums the Government have spent on *(a)* solar and *(b)* wind-powered forms of renewable energy since 2001; and if she will make a statement. [201585]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The Government have committed £117 million in capital grant support for Round 1 offshore wind projects. To date £7.5 million of this has been spent.

For solar, £31 million has been committed to the Major PV demonstration programme, which runs to March 2006. To date £18.8 million has been confirmed for projects and £3.3 million of this has been spent.

In addition the following has been spent on research on wind and solar technologies:

£ million

	Solar	*Wind*
2000–01	1.7	1.3
2001–02	2	1.7
2002–03	5.3	1.7

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment she has made of the future of photovoltaic (PV) technology within the UK energy market; and what plans she has to promote the use of PV technology. [201586]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* We have already funded PV installations to the tune of £25 million through our Major PV demonstration programme and £10 million through the Large Scale and Domestic Field Trials. We have seen a number of successes from the programme such as a growing number of renewable installations at a variety of scales. The installer base increasing significantly costs reducing and recent investments in manufacturing capacity in solar power in the UK.

The Government have listened to the calls for an extension of the Photovoltaics Major Demonstration Programme to give sufficient time for the development of a Low Carbon Buildings Programme (as recommended in the Renewables Innovation Review: February 2004). The Government have acted on these calls and my Department announced on 15 September a further £6 million for the PV Major Demonstration programme to enable the programme to be extended for a further year.

The DTI has also put effort into removing a number of barriers to the deployment of very small generators such as PV. These include reduction of VAT to 5 per cent. for professionally installed systems, a new PV Annex to Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG22), simplified connection agreements to the local network (G77 and G83/1) and Installer Training and Accreditation Schemes. In addition the Government have amended the Renewables Obligation to enable very small generators like PV to accumulate their production over a year, rather than a month, so as to qualify for ROCs.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking in respect of

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The Energy Act 2004 laid the foundation for the creation of a single GB market for wholesale electricity trading and transmission. Charges to connect to and use the GB transmission system, and therefore access the GB market, are still being developed by National Grid. Ofgem considered NGC's proposals last month, and concluded that further work was required in respect of use of system charges. It did, however, approve National Grid's proposed connection charges, i.e. the charges that relate to the specific assets provided at each site to connect to the network.

NGC's proposal for the use of system charges will be revised and resubmitted to Ofgem for approval in February 2005. The transmission charging methodology is planned to take effect when BETTA is implemented.

Ofgem also recently announced that, following approval of a use of system charging methodology, it is minded to implement a discount against transmission charges of approximately £4 per kilowatt for smaller generators connected to the transmission system at 132KV. This is expected to encompass a number of larger wind-farm developments, particularly in the north of Scotland.

Further, the Government took a legislative power in the Energy Act 2004 to allow the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to introduce a dispensation regime in order to limit the transmission charges to renewable generators in a specified area of Great Britain, if the transmission charges would otherwise materially hinder renewable development in that area. DTI recently commissioned an independent study to examine the likely impact of GB transmission charges on renewable development, in particular Scotland.

The establishment of the GB market will also remove charges for using the Anglo-Scottish interconnector currently paid by Scottish generators including windfarms, exporting to England and Wales. It will also give Scottish generators including renewables access to the GB market as a whole rather than their development being constrained by the limited size of the electricity market in Scotland.

Small Business Research Initiative

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many research and development procurement opportunities were disseminated by her Department to small and medium-sized enterprises registered through the Small Business Research Initiative web portal in each year since 2001–02, including figures for 2004–05 to date; and what the value of such opportunities was in each case. [201303]

Nigel Griffiths: Since 2001–02 the Small Business Research Initiative web portal has provided information on 98 research and development procurement opportunities, with a total value of £5,720,030. Information for each year is given in the table:

	Number of proposals	*Value (£)*
2001–02	10	367,000
2002–03	41	2,404,000
2003–04	33	1,999,030
2004–05	14	950,000

Supermarket Code of Practice

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Office of Fair Trading will publish the report of its audit of the Supermarket Code of Practice. [202041]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is a matter for the Chairman of the OFT and I have asked him to write to the hon. Member directly.

Wind Farms

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate has been made of the likely reduction in emissions from the use of modern wind turbines; and on what research this estimate was based. [201329]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government's target of 10 per cent. of electricity supply from renewables in 2010 would save approximately 2.5 MtC per year if the equivalent amount of energy were generated from gas. We expect around 7–8 per cent. of that 10 per cent. total to come from wind.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Arms Embargo (China)

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK Government supports the lifting of the arms embargo on China; and if he will make a statement. [200354]

Mr. Rammell: The Government support the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China. This review is ongoing—it was last discussed by EU Foreign Ministers at the 22 November General Affairs and External Relations Council. The Government do not wish to exclude any options for the review, nor to pre-empt the conclusion of the review.

The Government continue to implement the Arms Embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply on 3 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 240–41, to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker).

Arms Sales (Code of Conduct)

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he supports the introduction of a more stringent EU Code of Conduct for Arms Sales; and if he will make a statement. [200355]

Mr. MacShane: The United Kingdom instigated the ongoing review of the Code of Conduct, in which we continue to play an active role. We are keen to ensure

developments, such as controls on brokering and intangible military technology transfers, and increases the transparency of member states' arms exports. This will increase the ability of the Code properly to regulate EU defence exports.

Correspondence

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will instruct the Visa Correspondence Section of UKvisas to respond to the correspondence of 4 October from the hon. Member for Edinburgh West regarding Mr. Thomas William Case. [200367]

Mr. Mullin: UK visas replied to the hon. Member on 25 November.

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Walsall, North of 1 November regarding a constituent. [200607]

Mr. Mullin: I replied to the hon. Member on 30 November.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will instruct the Visa Correspondence Section of UKvisas to respond to the correspondence by email of 15 November and 16 November from the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West regarding Mr. Muhammad Tariq. [200369]

Mr. Mullin: UKvisas replied to the hon. Member on 26 November.

Cyprus

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he is having with the Government of the Republic of Cyprus on the clearing of minefields in the UN buffer zone in Cyprus; whether this action is supported by the British Government; and if he will make a statement. [200305]

Mr. MacShane: We welcome the decision of the Government of Cyprus in June 2004 to work with the United Nations to start mine clearance in the buffer zone. The de-mining programme has the support of member states of the European Union and the European Commission and is funded by the European Union through its 'Partnership for the Future' programme at an estimated cost of €2.5 million. Work began on 18 November, conducted by two British companies, and is estimated to last for just over a year.

We also welcome a statement made by Mr. Talat, elected leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community, on 18 November in which he said that the Turkish Cypriots would soon sign an agreement with the United Nations which would allow them also to begin mine clearing operations.

The UK Government welcome any contribution to normalisation of the situation on the island. De-mining is an important step towards this.

Darfur

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the supply of logistical and communications support to the African Union monitoring force in Darfur; and whether equipment supplied to the monitoring force as part of that support has been accompanied by instructions comprehensible to the troops comprising that force. [201978]

Hilary Benn: I have been asked to reply.

The UK is in the process of flying out 143 vehicles it has purchased for the African Union (AU) monitoring mission headquarters in El Fasher, North Darfur. The vehicles (131 Toyota 4/4 Landcruisers and 12 three tonne trucks), have been purchased following the Prime Minister's announcement of a further £12 million of support for the African Union (AU) monitoring mission on 7 October 2004. Almost half of these vehicles are already on the ground, and the full number is expected to arrive by mid-December. They are fully fitted with the equipment requested by the AU, including communications equipment. All instruction manuals for this equipment are in English.

These vehicles will make the AU mission more effective, enabling the observers and troops to carry out more proactive monitoring, and to respond to specific incidents more quickly. This is part of DFID's ongoing support to the AU's efforts to resolve the crisis in Darfur: DFID has now committed more than £14 million to their operation, from the joint DFID-FCO-MOD Africa Conflict Prevention Pool. We continue to work closely with the AU to ensure that they have all the support they require.

DFID understands that there have been problems with communications equipment for the land bases which operates in German. This has caused problems for the AU but is being resolved by the donor who provided it.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on reports that 31 adults and two minors resident in Kalma Camp, Darfur, have been sentenced to death; and if he will intervene on behalf of those so sentenced. [202706]

Mr. Mullin: On 22 November five people were arrested in Kalma Camp, and charged with supporting one of the Darfur rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army. In a separate incident on 28 November, 28 people from Kalma Camp were charged with murder. Under Sudanese law, all could face the death penalty.

All those under arrest are receiving legal advice from the Sudanese Organisation Against Torture, which received funding for some of its activities from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Our embassy in Khartoum regularly raises abolition of the death penalty and the detention of Internally Displaced Persons with the Government of Sudan, and had detailed discussions during the joint Sudan/EU dialogue meetings in September 2004. We will continue to follow these cases closely.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199631]

Mr. Mullin: All websites on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) web platform have been designed to meet both W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 and Cabinet Office Guidelines for UK Government websites. The FCO has additionally implemented recommendations from the Royal National Institute for the Blind about enhancing website accessibility for the partially sighted.

DR Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the reports of misbehaviour by UN troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo; what action he has taken as a result; and whether he has taken up the issue of abuse with the governments of the troops concerned. [202703]

Mr. Mullin: The UK and other Security Council members urged the UN to make a quick response to allegations of sexual exploitation by personnel in the UN Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). The UN initiated an investigation into the allegations and called for troop contributing countries to ensure that the UN's investigations are followed up by appropriate disciplinary action.

In UN Security Council resolution 1565, adopted on 1 October 2004, the Security Council voiced its concern at the allegations. It requested the UN Secretary General to continue to investigate the allegations and for the UN and troop contributing countries to take appropriate disciplinary action in cases of misconduct. In November, the UN Secretary-General issued a statement voicing his outrage at the accusations and pledging to stamp out such behaviour. We support the resolution and the Secretary General's statement and, while there have been no allegations made against UK personnel serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), any such allegation would be thoroughly investigated and the appropriate action taken.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent reports of Rwandan troops operating within the Democratic Republic of Congo. [202705]

Mr. Mullin: We are very concerned by reports that Rwanda plans to send troops into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UK and the wider international community have made clear to Rwanda that any incursion into the territory of the DRC would be unacceptable. We are working with the Security Council, EU and regional partners to seek an urgent solution to the problem through a process of dialogue between Rwanda and DRC. My right hon. Friend the International Development Secretary has spoken to President Kagame to emphasise that unilateral military action is not the answer to the problem of disarming the Ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises/Interahamwe armed

Drugs (Burma)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of how much *(a)* heroin and *(b)* methamphetamine was produced in Burma in each of the last three years; what estimate he has made for the current year; how much he estimates will reach the UK; and if he will make a statement. [200031]

Mr. Rammell: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that opiate cultivation in Burma has declined from 81,000 hectares in 2002 through 62,000 in 2003 to 44,000 hectares in 2004. UNODC reports indicate that Burma is a major source country for the production and trafficking of methamphetamines. But there are no reliable estimates for production.

There is no evidence that drugs produced in or smuggled via Burma reach the UK in significant quantities.

Equatorial Guinea

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his written ministerial statement on Equatorial Guinea of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 37–39WS, whether British officials received the Johann Smith notes after May. [202894]

Mr. Straw: On 24 May 2004 a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official received a fax, to which was attached a report, claimed to be written by Mr. Johann Smith and dated December 2003.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to help resolve the boundary dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. [200144]

Mr. Mullin: The UK is in close touch with Ethiopia and Eritrea and welcomes the recent announcement by Ethiopia of a five-point proposal for resolving the boundary dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The acceptance in principle of the decision of the Boundary Commission is an important indication of Ethiopia's commitment to the Boundary Commission's final and binding decision. We remain ready to help in any we can.

European Union

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many European Community directly applicable *(a)* regulations and *(b)* directives requiring United Kingdom legislation or action have become applicable in each year since 1974; how many (i) became time expired, (ii) were replaced and (iii) became redundant in each year; and what the total figures in each category were up to December 2003. [200098]

Mr. MacShane: Information relating to the number of European Community directly applicable regulations and directives requiring United Kingdom transposition

only at disproportionate cost. Government Departments record individually the primary and secondary legislation introduced to implement EU requirements. Only a small proportion of Foreign and Commonwealth Office legislation is introduced to implement EU requirements.

Similarly there is no centrally held information by the Government on European Community regulations and directives which became time expired, were replaced or became redundant in each year. However, the Commission is building up a body of knowledge in this area—it has identified more than 450 pieces of legislation which it considers could be repealed or formally recognised as obsolescent and is working to take this forward. Furthermore, we welcome Commissioner Verheugen's announcement at last week's Competitiveness Council to withdraw 100 pending Commission legislative proposals. As EU regulatory reform champions, we have strongly supported the Commission's work in this area and will continue to do so.

General Affairs and External Relations Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the outcome was of the General Affairs and External Relations Council held on 22 and 23 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [199753]

Mr. MacShane: The answer is as follows:

Outcome of the 22/23 November 2004 General Affairs and External Relations Council

My right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary and the International Development Secretary, John Grant (UK's Permanent Representative to the EU) and I represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels on 22 and 23 November.

Conclusions were agreed on: Africa—Peace and security action plan, ESDP, Middle East Peace Process, Iran, Belarus, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Somalia, and Great Lakes.

General Affairs Session

Preparation for the 17 December European Council

The Council examined an annotated draft agenda prepared by the Presidency for the European Council meeting to be held in Brussels on 16 and 17 December. It will prepare the meeting in greater detail at the GAERC on 13 and 14 December. The main agenda items are: EU enlargement, Terrorism, EU financial framework for 2007–13, EU area of freedom, security and justice, and external affairs (expected to include Middle East Peace Process, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan and the EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East). The Government are largely content with the current agenda, but will discuss in greater depth at the 13 December GAERC.

Financial Framework For 2007–13 (Including External Actions)

The Council took note of a progress report on preparation of the EU's financial framework for the Commission's proposals as regards financing of the EU's external actions policies. The Presidency noted that most delegations agreed with the proposal to simplify the structure of the EU budget. Many delegations considered that the proposed new financing instruments for external relations would allow the Council adequate political control, although a number highlighted conditions to be respected and emphasised the role to be played by the member states. The Government emphasised the need for a budget structure which enabled the EU to meet its priorities flexibly. The Presidency's aim is for the European Council in December to define the principles and guidelines for further work on the new financial framework with the aim of achieving political agreement next year.

The Government have argued that the Commission's proposal for real terms spending increases of 35 per cent. from 2007 to 2013 are unrealistic and unacceptable. We believe that the priorities of an enlarged Union can be met within a budget of 1 per cent. EU GNI. We have therefore argued for a robust assessment of the value added of EU spending in order to ensure that EU spending is focussed and effective.

External Relations Session

ESDP

Defence Ministers approved the six-monthly Single Progress Report on capability development and their declaration on development of military capabilities. In particular, this declaration included commitments from member states to hold battlegroups at very high readiness from 2005. The GAERC also approved the 2005 budget and work programme of the European Defence Agency, and Defence Ministers (meeting in Agency Steering Board format) also agreed conclusions on the European Commission's Green Paper on defence procurement. The GAERC also agreed to launch the EU operation in Bosnia (EUFOR) on 2 December.

Improving European defence capability is one the Government's key aims for ESDP, and the Government have played a major role in the capability development commitments which the Council approved, in particular the battlegroups concept. The UK has offered one national battlegroup and one joint battlegroup with the Netherlands to the EU's co-ordinated pool of battlegroups for full operational capability from 2007. Together with France, the UK will provide the EU's initial operational capability in the first half of 2005. The Government supports the agreed European Defence Agency work programme, and the UK is providing the EU Force Commander in Bosnia for the first year.

Middle East Peace Process

Foreign Ministers discussed the Middle East Peace Process over lunch. The Council expressed its condolences to the Palestinian people on the occasion of President Arafat's death and commended the approach of the current leadership in organising a smooth transition. The Council reiterated its commitment to pursue the short-term programme of action proposed by High Representative Solana to the European Council and concluded that immediate action is required to support the presidential elections, to improve the security situation and to provide financial support to the Palestinian Authority. The Foreign Secretary agreed

opportunity to play a stronger role. He briefed the Council on my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's positive discussion with President Bush in Washington.

Iran

Foreign Ministers also discussed Iran over lunch. They welcomed the agreement on nuclear issues and future cooperation following talks with France, Germany and the UK (E3) supported by the High Representative. The Council welcomed Iran's decision to suspend fully all enrichment related and reprocessing activities, and to sustain this suspension while negotiations are underway on an agreement on long-term arrangements. It expected Iran to take the steps necessary to enable the IAEA to report on 25 November that full suspension was in place. The Council confirmed the EU's readiness to explore ways to develop political and economic co-operation with Iran. It recalled the conclusions of the European Council on 5 November that negotiations on a Trade and Co-operation Agreement would resume as soon as suspension was verified. As part of the E3, the Government played a major part in negotiating Iran's decision to suspend fully all enrichment related and reprocessing activities.

Eu-China Relations

Over lunch Ministers addressed EU-China relations, in preparation for the EU-China Summit on 8 December 2004. A large number of subjects will be discussed at the summit with a view to raising the relationship between the EU and China to a higher level. More specifically, with regard to the arms embargo, the Presidency confirmed, following the discussion, that the EU was ready to give a positive signal to China. However, at the same time a number of concerns must be addressed, including in the field of human rights, and work must continue on strengthening the EU Code of Conduct on arms exports.

The Government support the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China. This review is ongoing—it was last discussed by EU Foreign Ministers at the 11 October GAERC. The Government do not wish to exclude any options for the review, nor to pre-empt the conclusion of the review. The Government continues to implement the Arms Embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedley (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 240–41.

Ukraine

There was widespread concern within the Council over the Ukrainian electoral process, as well as at the likely outcome. The Council considered next steps and they issued a Presidency statement calling on the Ukrainian authorities to review together with OSCE/ODIHR the electoral process and results.

Subsequent to the GAERC the Foreign Secretary made a statement on 23 November urging the Ukrainian authorities to cooperate with the OSCE to ensure that all proper procedures, including legal challenges to the results, are fully followed before declaring a final result. A copy of the Statement is available on the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases. The Ukrainian authorities should investigate all allegations of fraud to ensure that the result reflects the democratic will of the Ukrainian people. We will closely monitor the situation with our EU partners.

Belarus

The Council called upon President Lukashenko and his government to reverse their present policies and to embark on fundamental democratic and economic reforms. The Council noted with concern that the 17 October 2004 parliamentary elections and referendum in Belarus were not conducted in a free and fair manner. The Council strongly condemned the attacks on peaceful demonstrators, individual opposition leaders and journalists that took place after 17 October. The Council agreed to continue to follow developments in Belarus closely and will take further action as appropriate. The Government support this approach.

Athena Financing Mechanism

The Council examined if the ATHENA mechanism for the financing of the common costs of EU-led military operations could better meet the needs of EU Rapid Response, in terms of transportation of the forces and early provision of funds to ATHENA. It came to no agreement and tasked the relevant Council bodies, in relation with the EU Military Staff and the ATHENA administrator, to continue reflecting on the most appropriate ways and means to finance EU Rapid Response.

The Government believe the the costs of deployment should normally fall to member states and should not automatically be financed in common. It is important to maintain incentives on member states to improve their capabilities in this area and to find the most effective means of deploying their forces. The Government's position received considerable support from the other partners. The Government are able to provide funds rapidly to the ATHENA mechanism when required, and therefore does not intend to participate in a common fund for this purpose.

Cote D'Ivoire

The French Foreign Minister, Michel Barnier, briefed on recent events. Almost all French nationals had now departed. The Dutch Foreign Minister Bot, speaking as the Presidency, informed Foreign Ministers that South African President Mbeki had debriefed him on his recent discussions with the key figures in the Cote d'Ivoire crisis. The Government shares the international community's condemnation of the Government of Cote d'Ivoire's breach of the cease-fire and the ensuing attacks on foreign residents. The Government continue to believe that there can be no military solution to the conflict and supports the UN and AU in their efforts to find a political settlement.

Great Lakes

The Council welcomed the outcome of the First Summit for Heads of State of the AU-UN International Conference for peace and security in the Great Lakes region. The Council stressed the importance of this process leading to a final outcome that will lead to lasting peace and stability, good governance, democracy and respect for human rights, socio-economic

development and regional integration. The Council reiterated the willingness of the EU to continue its support, through the Group of Friends of the Conference, to the preparatory process for the second summit to ensure its successful outcome. The Government will do what they can to assist this process and is planning to contribute US$1 million to the Conference.

Sudan

The Council welcomed the urgently needed deployment of the military elements of the expanded African Union (AU) force in Darfur (AMIS II) and the leading role of the AU. It will consider, in close discussion with the AU, possible support for the implementation of the policing elements of AMIS II. The Council welcomed the progress achieved at the peace talks in Abuja and noted that there is urgent need for additional humanitarian assistance. The EU has already provided more that €325 million from bilateral and Community funds for 2004 but substantial additional amounts need to be raised. The EU will consider increasing its humanitarian support, while encouraging other donors to provide additional support for humanitarian operations.

The Government welcome the unanimous UN Security Council Resolution 1574. There is an urgent need for progress in resolving the Dafur crisis and to maintain the pressure on both sides (Government of Sudan and rebels) to abide by the commitments they have given. The Government welcome the AU's efforts to resolve the crisis in Darfur both through the peace talks in Abuja and through its monitoring mission on the ground. The Government will continue to press the EU to consider actively what it can do to assist and reinforce the AU's efforts.

Somalia

The Council reviewed recent developments in Somalia, in particular the establishment of the Transitional Parliament, the election of Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as President and the appointment of Ali Mohamed Ghedi as Prime Minster. The Council would welcome the early establishment of a broad-based government in Somalia. The Council reiterated its support for the efforts of all parties seeking peace and reconciliation in Somalia and stands ready to work with the United Nations and all relevant international organisations in supporting the peace and reconciliation process and the transition to a federal state. The Government feel it is important that the international community actively support the framework for a UN led dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government.

AOB—Guinea Bissau

Portuguese Foreign Minister Monterio gave an update on the mission of the Lusophone Community which had the objective of promoting dialogue between the government and the military and whose conclusions would focus on security sector reform. Further funding was requested. The Government currently provide multilateral support through the UN, EU and International Financial Institutions. It supports the initiative for the Lusophone Community to send a small mission to promote dialogue between the military and political communities in Guinea-Bissau.

Development Agenda—23 November 2004

2005 Millennium Development Goals Stocktake

Conclusions were adopted which outlined a collective EU approach to the 2005 Millennium Summit's stocktake on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), via a joint EU report focused on aid resources and new financing mechanisms, coherence of aid and other polices, plus a new initiative on Africa. The Government stressed that the Summit must acknowledge that progress in meeting the MDGs was much too slow, and that changes in policies were needed. The key issues were to increase aid resources; debt relief, where the UK hoped others would follow our initiative to pay off the outstanding debts of the poorest countries for the IFIs; innovative financing mechanisms; and improving trade opportunities for developing countries.

Follow up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

Member states adopted two sets of Conclusions giving the Commission a renewed mandate to pursue its policy on these issues. The EU has played a prominent role in the ICPD context from the start and its policy and approaches are now fully aligned with the Cairo (ICPD) agenda. But more funding was needed to implement the Cairo action plan. Also, poverty diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, remain a major cause of death as indicated by shocking new figures recently revealed by UNAIDS. The Government are particularly pleased to see the links that the Conclusions make between Sexual and Reproductive Health HIV. HIV and AIDS will be a priority during the UK Presidency of the EU and G8 next year.

Monterrey Follow Up

Conclusions and the Action Plan on harmonisation were agreed. The Action Plan was drawn up by a special working party of member states' experts and will be submitted to the Second OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) High Level Forum on Harmonisation and Alignment for Aid Effectiveness in Paris 2005. The Government welcomed the Action Plan. It sets out minimum standards for member states and the Commission when working with one another and partner countries. But the Government consider that the EU should still strive to do more and learn from successes such as in Mozambique and Vietnam, and initiatives in conflict countries such as Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Annual Report 2004 on EC Development Policy and External Assistance

This is one of the principle tools available to assess EC's external actions programmes. The Government welcome this report as a marked improvement on previous years. However, it is still not the strategic management tool we would like it to be. It should be more analytical and focus on progress against strategic objectives, such as global poverty reduction, the MDGs and EC's Development Policy Conclusions, reflecting the UK's concerns, were agreed.

Genocide Convention

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what obligations the signatories to the Genocide Convention are required to fulfil in a situation where genocide is taking place. [199504]

Mr. Rammell: Under Article 1 of the Genocide Convention 1951, the Parties undertake to prevent and punish the crime of genocide whether committed in time of peace or war. Under Article 5, they undertake to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or genocide-related crimes, and Article 6 provides that persons charged with such acts shall be tried. In addition, in Article 7, the Parties 'pledge themselves . . . to grant extradition' in cases of genocide or genocide-related crimes.

Guantanamo Bay

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK citizens *(a)* are held and *(b)* have been held in each year since 2001 in Guantanamo Bay; and if he will make a statement. [200251]

Mr. Mullin: Eight British nationals were transferred to Guantanamo Bay in 2002 and one in 2003. Five were released and returned to the UK in March 2004. There are currently four British nationals detained at Guantanamo Bay.

The Government's position has been clear. The British detainees should either be tried fairly in accordance with international standards or they should be returned to the UK. Discussions are continuing on the situation of the remaining four.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the conditions in which detainees are held at Guantanamo Bay and *(b)* the prospects for detainees at Guantanamo Bay receiving a fair trial; and if he will make a statement. [200252]

Mr. Mullin: British officials have made nine welfare visits to the British detainees at Guantanamo Bay, most recently in October.

Detainees are housed in indoor accommodation with individual sleeping, toilet and washing facilities and air-ventilation. They are able to practise their religion and have access to reading and writing material. The detainees and their families can send letters to each other. Our visits have found that medical facilities at Guantanamo Bay are of a high standard.

We have had concerns about the conditions of detention of some of the British detainees, which we have actively pursued with the US authorities. We have secured improvements to the conditions in which they have been held. We continue to pursue outstanding issues.

I also refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him today (UIN 200251).

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK citizens detained at Guantanamo Bay have had their cases reviewed by the Combat Status Review Tribunal; and if he will make a statement. [200253]

Mr. Mullin: The US has established a Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT) process to determine whether Guantanamo Bay detainees are properly classified as enemy combatants and to permit each detainee the opportunity to contest this classification. We are following the progress of the CSRTs and are monitoring the British detainees' cases. We understand that the CSRT for Mr. Abbasi has been completed with the conclusion that he is an enemy combatant.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he intends to meet his new US counterpart to discuss UK detainees held at Guantanamo Bay; and if he will make a statement. [200254]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him today (UIN 200251).

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had frequent discussions with his current US counterpart, Colin Powell, including on the British detainees in Guantanamo Bay. This dialogue will continue with the new US Secretary of State, Ms Condoleezza Rice, once she is confirmed in her position by the US Congress.

Haiti

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the UN peace-keeping mission in Haiti reaches its full complement of 6,000 troops as soon as possible. [199749]

Mr. Rammell: The Government work to support an effective UN mission in Haiti and continues to take an active part in Security Council discussions on Haiti to ensure deployment of sufficient personnel and the best use of resources. There has been considerable progress since the establishment of the mission—particularly with recent troop deployments I refer my hon. Friend to the UN Secretary-General Report S2004/908 of 18 November, available on the UN website: www.un.org. There are currently 4,732 total uniformed personnel serving in the UN Mission in Haiti, including 3,769 troops and 963 civilian police, supported by 258 international civilian personnel and about 300 local civilian staff.

The Government place great importance on ensuring the placement of qualified and trained personnel in the UN Mission in Haiti. In September 2004, representatives of the Metropolitan Police Service provided training assistance to policemen from the Chinese Republic for their deployment in Haiti. The trainers focussed specifically on understanding and practical application of the Rules of Engagement to ensure that the Chinese contingent would have the requisite skills for effective work on the ground. Ninety-five Chinese riot police were deployed on 17 October, representing their first ever police deployment abroad.

The UK also works to support deployment of trained personnel to all UN missions. We currently have 447 military personnel and 115 civilian police officers deployed to UN operations. In addition we support capacity building of the UN through the Government's WUN Strategy*, an £8 million programme under the joint DFID/MOD/FCO Global Conflict Prevention Pool to enable the UK to run training courses to develop

the skills of trainers and to support specific training exercises for countries that provide or are seeking to provide peacekeepers for UN missions.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made in the UN to ensure that disarmament in Haiti takes place effectively and involves all communities. [199750]

Mr. Rammell: The Government place great importance on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDK) in all peace support operations. We worked to ensure that the mandate establishing the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) focused on DDK. Resolution 1542 (30 April 2004) tasked MINUSTAH to 'assist the Transitional Government, particularly the Haitian National Police with comprehensive and sustainable DDR programmes for all armed groups, including women and children associated with such groups, as well as weapons control and public security measures.'

This emphasis on DDR continues to be crucial. The Government are currently involved in consultations concerning the recent UN Secretary-General's report S/2004/908 of 18 November, available on the UN website: www.un.org and the mandate renewal for MINUSTAH. In these discussions, we continue to emphasise the importance of effective DDR, including the urgency of establishing a National Commission.

The Government also support UN capacity building on DDR. This year the Government are providing over £150,000 for a project which aims to develop a comprehensive set of common and integrated policies, guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures, as well as Headquarter and field planning mechanisms and tools for the planning and conduct of DDR in a peacekeeping context.

Iraq

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what definitions he uses of *(a)* terrorists and *(b)* insurgents in relation to Iraq; what his latest estimate is of the number of (i) terrorists and (ii) insurgents operating in Iraq; how many of those (A) terrorists and (B) insurgents operating in Iraq he estimates are (1) not Iraqi citizens and (2) from a foreign country; how many (x) terrorists and *(y)* insurgents have been (X) killed and (Y) captured in Iraq since major combat operations ended on 1 June 2003; and if he will make a statement. [200495]

Mr. Rammell: There is a definition of terrorism in the Terrorism Act 2000 and there are also widely accepted definitions of insurgency. A large number of different groups involved in violence in Iraq fit into both categories or move between the two. It is impossible to come to a precise figure for the number of terrorists and insurgents currently operating in Iraq. We continue to believe that a sizeable number come from foreign countries. The Ministry of Defence report that in the region of 6,500 individuals have been detained by the UK since March 2003. They were either detained as a prisoner or interned war or for imperative reasons of security. There are no reliable figures for the number of terrorists and insurgents killed in Iraq since the end of major combat operations on 1 May 2003.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons the requirement that information received from allied intelligence and security agencies should not be disseminated further without the consent of the originator was not applied to the Butler Review with regard to the sharing of the intelligence on the claim that Iraq sought to procure uranium from Africa. [201259]

Mr. Straw: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave her on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1552W.

Ivory Coast

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have had with European Union counterparts regarding the conflict in Ivory Coast; and if he will make a statement. [199499]

Mr. Mullin: During a UK-France summit on 18 November, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary expressed solidarity with France's position and thanked Foreign Minister Barnier for French assistance in the evacuation of British citizens. Both agreed that it was important to return to the Linas-Marcoussis agreement, and that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire was of great importance for regional stability.

UK officials have been in regular contact with their European colleagues, including the Dutch, German and Portuguese, about the evacuation of their citizens and the wider conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

Namibia

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Namibia in November; and if he will make a statement. [199500]

Mr. Mullin: In August 2004, the Southern African Development Community agreed a set of principles by which free and fair elections in the region would be judged. We believe the General and Presidential elections held in Namibia on 15/16 November accorded well with those principles.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the land reform policy in Namibia; what recent discussions the Government have had with *(a)* the Namibian Government and *(b)* white farmers' groups regarding land reform; and if he will make a statement. [199501]

Mr. Mullin: We support the need for land reform in Namibia, but any programme must be transparent, equitable and within the rule of law. Our High Commissioner in Windhoek discusses the issue regularly with the Namibian Government, the Namibian Agricultural Union and other interested parties.

Palestinian Elections

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions are planned with the Palestinian Authority on elections; [200128]

(2) if his Department will allocate funds to assist the Palestinian election in January 2005. [200130]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed elections with both the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority (PA) during his visit to the region on 24 and 25 November. Abu Mazen, President of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, said that the PA had announced local elections to begin on 23 December and Presidential elections to be held on 9 January. The PA expect to be able to hold Palestinian Legislative Council elections in mid-May.

The Foreign Secretary offered full UK support to the PA's efforts. As a member of the Electoral Reform Support Group in the Occupied Territories, the UK is involved in regular consultation with the PA in order to support the conduct of elections.

We have already allocated funds to assist the Palestinian elections in January 2005. We are providing £750,000 funding in support of the Palestinian Authority's efforts to establish a Central Intervention Force whose first role will be to contribute towards election security. We are also contributing through the European Union. The European Commission has provided €10 million this year to the Central Elections Committee for presidential and legislative elections. The UK contribution accounts for 19 per cent. of EU funding.

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support the United Kingdom is giving to the Palestinian authority for the elections scheduled for 9 January 2005. [200278]

Mr. Rammell: During his visit to the region last month my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary offered full UK support to the Palestinian authority for the presidential elections in January. He also pressed the Israeli Government to do all they can to facilitate the Palestinian electoral process, including freedom of movement and allowing East Jerusalem voters to vote. Israel gave assurances it would co-operate.

We are supporting the Palestinian authority financially, both bilaterally and through the European Union. We are also supporting the elections in practical ways, for example, liaising with organisers of the EU electoral observation mission on sending out British election observers, and encouraging an Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe electoral observation mission.

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list British citizens held and released in Saudi Arabia since 1997. [200126]

Mr. Mullin: Since 1997, 53 British Nationals have been held in Saudi Arabia. I regret that for reasons of consular confidentiality, we are unable to list the names of these British nationals, because disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy under Exemption 12 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. Other restrictions under Exemption 15 also apply; in this case the Data Protection Act 1998. However we can confirm that all except one of the 53 have been released.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to visit Saudi Arabia. [200127]

Mr. Rammell: Foreign engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not our practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel.

The Foreign Secretary visited Saudi Arabia in March and October this year.

Voter Registration

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what extra resources will be made available to embassies and high commissions in their efforts to publicise overseas voter registration, following his meeting on 10 November with the Electoral Commission. [200483]

Mr. Mullin: The Electoral Commission has the lead responsibility for publicising overseas registration. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) supports their efforts. The FCO has not been approached by the Electoral Commission to provide additional assistance. However, we are willing to consider any requests we receive.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what decisions were taken at the meeting between representatives of his Department and the Electoral Commission on 10 November regarding assistance from his Department to the Electoral Commission in its efforts to publicise overseas voter registration. [200484]

Mr. Mullin: At its last meeting with the Electoral Commission on 10 November, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) reiterated its support for the Commission, as lead agency, in its efforts to publicise overseas voter registration.

Although no clear indication of what assistance they require was given by the Electoral Commission, the FCO undertook as in previous years, to make any suitable publicity material produced by the Electoral Commission—such as leaflets and posters—available through its network of overseas Posts. Where possible, the FCO would also assist in local advertising ahead of any visit overseas by an Electoral Commission spokesperson. The Electoral Commission agreed to inform the FCO of any changes required to the overseas voter registration content on the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk and relevant FCO post websites.

HEALTH

Salt

15. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on levels of dietary salt intake. [202216]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government are committed, through the NHS Plan and the recently published White Paper Choosing Health: "Making healthy choices easier", to reducing population average intakes of salt in order to reduce the burden of cardio-vascular disease. The Department of Health and the Food Standards Agency are working with the food industry and others to reduce the salt content of processed foods to reduce population average intakes to 6g per day by 2010.

Funding

16. **Jeff Ennis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to reduce inequalities in NHS funding between health authorities. [202217]

Mr. Hutton: We aim to move PCT funding as quickly as practical to their fair shares. We have already made significant progress in moving in this direction. We intend to accelerate this progress in the next round of PCT allocations.

Allergy Clinics

17. **Dr. Iddon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, To ask the Secretary of State for Healthif he will make a statement on the availability of NHS allergy clinics. [202218]

Dr. Ladyman: GPs provide an excellent service for people with mild to moderate allergies, and refer patients with more severe problems to an appropriate Consultant in the local hospital. People with complex multiple allergies can be referred to specialist allergy clinics; by their GP or by their Consultant.

MRSA

18. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the incidence of MRSA in East Sussex hospitals. [202219]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I am advised that both Trusts in the East Sussex area have clear policies and strategies in place for reducing MRSA.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what extra resources have been made available to Medway Maritime NHS Trust to combat the MRSA virus. [202212]

Dr. John Reid: We have made clear that reducing healthcare associated infection is a key priority for all National Health Service organisations.

Between 2003–04 and 2005–06, Medway Primary Care Trust which commissions services from Medway Maritime NHS Trust will receive increases of £61.2 million for health care services, including reducing hospital infections.

Greater Manchester Surgical Unit

20. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions have taken place between the relevant strategic health authority and the Department of Health about the Greater Manchester surgical unit. [202221]

Miss Johnson: Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has developed the Greater Manchester Surgical Unit in close co-operation with and under the guidance of the Department of Health.

Assessment of local delivery options is for the SHA to make as part of its capacity planning and local delivery planning responsibilities. All SHAs have recently submitted their capacity planning returns, which are currently the subject of discussions between DH and the SHAs.

Care Homes

21. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health, To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many residential care home beds have closed since 1997. [202222]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the number of residential care home places that have closed is not centrally available.

Information on the number of residential care home places in England for adults aged 18 and over, at 31 March for the years 1997 to 2001 is shown in the table.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but comparable details are not available.

However, the recent edition of the Laing & Buisson Care of Elderly People Market Survey 2004 puts the national bed capacity in care homes from adults with physical disabilities and people over 64 at 456,000 with demand estimated to be around 444,000, leaving UK spare capacity of 12,000. The report shows that although capacity has fallen, occupancy dropped by an identical amount.

Number of residential care places for adults aged 18 and over in England, 31 March 1997 to 2001

England[1]	*Rounded numbers*
1997	534,400
1998	553,500
1999	546,200
2000	539,300
2001	528,000

[1] Includes places in residential homes, mental nursing homes, private hospitals and clinics.

Source:
RA and RH(N)

LIFT Programme

22. **Dr. Starkey**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of the NHS local improvement finance trust programme. [202223]

Kenya	0	0
Malawi	0	0

of cat and dog fur being imported into *(a)* the UK and

Dr. John Reid: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friends the Members for Bedford (Mr. Patrick Hall) and for Ilford North (Ms. Linda Perham) earlier today.

Dentists

23. **Bob Spink**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the new dentists' contract on dental laboratories in personal dental service pilot sites. [202224]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We commissioned an evaluation of the Personal Dental Service schemes, which was published in 2002 in advance of planning of the new contractual arrangements for NHS dentistry to come into force from October 2005. The report supported the general principles of PDS and identified some changes in activity, including an indication that dentists may prescribe proportionately fewer intricate dental appliances under PDS than dentists working to the current General Dental Services contract. However, the sample was small and it is too early to draw any firm conclusions.

Cialis (Counterfeiting)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has discussed the counterfeiting of cialis and its discovery in the legitimate supply chain with relevant authorities in *(a)* the Netherlands and *(b)* other EU member states. [201686]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has been in contact with counterparts in all European Union countries, including the Netherlands, with regards to the counterfeiting of Cialis and its discovery in the legitimate supply chain. The mechanisms for contact include the recall of counterfeit medicines via the defective medicines reporting centre at the MHRA, and rapid alert notices sent through the EU enforcement network.

Since the discovery, a criminal investigation was instigated by the enforcement group of the MHRA. Senior officers from the MHRA have met with their counterparts from the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Sweden and Germany. The specific matters discussed are operational and confidential to the enquiry.

Cigarette Sales

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether proposals to raise the minimum age of sale in retail premises from 16 to 18 years for cigarettes are included in the White Paper consultation process. [201724]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no plans to increase the minimum age of sales of tobacco from 16 to 18. We are not aware of any evidence that such a change would have a significant impact in reducing smoking rates in children and young people.

However, the Government are concerned about the problem of illegal sales of cigarettes to children and young people and has proposed in the White Paper "Choosing Health", that there be increased sanctions for retailers who repeatedly flout the law on under-age sales. The White Paper proposes higher fines and new powers to prohibit retailers from selling tobacco if they persistently sell to under age children and young people.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [200785]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The target for replying to both of the above sorts of letters is that we should answer 90 per cent. within 20 working days of receipt.

Dentistry

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the number of general and personal dental service dentists per head of population in each *(a)* local authority and *(b)* health authority area; and if he will make a statement. [199901]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The numbers of general and personal dental service dentists at September 2003 per ten thousand population in each strategic health authority (SHA) area are shown in the table.Information showing the numbers in each local authority (LA) area has been placed in the Library. We are committed to a major expansion of the dental workforce, including the recruitment of the equivalent of 1,000 extra dentists and the funding of an additional 170 undergraduate dental training places by October 2005.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 10,000 population

Strategic Health Authority Name	*Dentist per 10,000 population*
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	4.38
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	5.12
Birmingham and the Black Country	3.80
Cheshire and Merseyside	4.26
County Durham and Tees Valley	3.68
Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire	4.35
Cumbria and Lancashire	3.81
Essex	3.74
Greater Manchester	4.03
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	4.20
Kent and Medway	4.04
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	3.33
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	3.96
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	3.75
North Central London	5.91
North East London	4.32
North West London	5.97
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	3.96
Shropshire and Staffordshire	3.70
Somerset and Dorset	4.34
South East London	4.67
South West London	5.35
South West Peninsula	4.43
South Yorkshire	3.81
Surrey and Sussex	5.31
Thames Valley	5.11
Trent	3.52
West Yorkshire	3.77

Note.
Population figures used are for mid-2003.

new year.

by region. [200546]

Dentists practising in several SNA or LA areas are counted in each area in which they practise.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental schools have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1984; and if he will make a statement. [199918]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No new dental schools have been opened since 1984. In 1992, the University College London and Edinburgh dental schools were closed with the loss of some 80 training places. We are committed to funding an additional 170 undergraduate training places for dentists by October 2005, an increase of 25 per cent. over the number of home students currently admitted to dental schools in England.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adults had a full set of dentures *(a)* in 1984, *(b)* in 1994 and *(c)* on the most recent date for which figures are available. [199919]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the form requested, but the decennial adult dental health surveys commissioned by the Department show that the percentage of adults with no teeth has fallen from 37 per cent. in 1968 to 12 per cent. in 1998.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of *(a)* adults and *(b)* children were registered with a NHS dentist in (i) England, (ii) each strategic health authority and (iii) each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [199927]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Table 1 shows the percentages of adults and children registered with a general dental service (GDS) dentist in England at 30 September in each of the years 1997 to 2004. Table 2 shows the percentage rates for each strategic health authority (SHA). Information showing a breakdown by primary care trust (PCT) has been placed in the Library.

The changes in the registration periods from 1 September 1996 affected the registration numbers from December 1997 onwards, so the 1997 figures are not comparable with the later figures. The registration figures for the later years are affected by dentists switching from the general dentist service to the personal dentist service. Patients may access national health service dental services without being registered.

The population figures for England and the SHAs were issued on 7 October. For the year 2004, population figures for 2003 have been used. Population figures by PCT are available only for the years 2001 and 2002. The 2001 figures have been used to calculate the registration rates for the years to 2001. The 2001 figures have been used to calculate the registration rates for the years 2002–04.

Table 1: Registrations with a GDS at 30 September in the years 1997 to 2004

Percentage

	Adults	*Children*
1987	51.8	65.7
1998	44.5	60.5
1999	44.0	60.8
2000	44.2	61.2
2001	43.8	60.9
2002	43.4	60.6
2003	42.9	60.2
2004	38.8	54.6

Table 2

	1997		*1998*		*1999*		*2000*	
Strategic health authority	*Adults*	*Children*	*Adults*	*Children*	*Adults*	*Children*	*Adults*	*Children*
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	46.9	71.6	39.6	67.2	39.6	68.5	39.2	68.9
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	51.6	64.5	43.1	59.9	43.8	60.4	44.0	61.0
Birmingham and the Black Country	54.1	56.5	46.7	52.1	47.0	52.4	47.0	52.3
Cheshire and Merseyside	59.2	70.2	50.0	63.0	50.1	63.4	49.8	62.4
County Durham and Tees Valley	59.0	70.1	52.1	64.3	52.0	64.1	52.9	65.2
Cumbria and Lancashire	52.1	66.6	46.1	62.2	46.8	62.8	47.0	62.6
Dorset and Somerset	55.6	76.4	49.0	71.3	48.3	71.1	49.1	72.4
Essex	48.7	63.4	42.6	59.7	43.8	61.8	45.0	62.6
Greater Manchester	60.7	72.0	52.5	65.6	52.2	65.7	52.2	65.6
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	51.1	65.5	43.9	61.7	42.3	61.5	41.9	62.4
Kent and Medway	41.3	64.8	36.6	60.7	36.6	61.0	36.9	61.2
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	53.8	64.2	46.0	57.8	46.9	60.2	45.9	59.7
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	52.0	67.7	46.2	63.1	46.6	63.3	46.9	63.7
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	51.5	69.3	46.2	64.5	46.3	65.3	46.9	66.1
North Central London	50.5	55.7	40.4	49.5	39.2	49.8	39.4	50.7
North East London	47.8	49.1	37.4	42.8	36.4	43.2	36.6	44.0
North West London	52.6	56.9	41.9	50.6	40.2	50.2	39.9	50.9
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	56.3	68.0	49.0	62.5	49.6	64.1	50.2	65.0
Shropshire and Staffordshire	46.0	69.4	39.3	64.1	39.0	64.5	38.8	64.1
South East London	47.6	56.8	38.7	51.2	36.2	49.7	35.9	49.9
South West London	46.7	61.6	37.4	54.8	36.0	54.1	36.5	55.2
South West Peninsula	50.3	71.1	42.3	65.6	41.6	67.1	42.7	67.8
South Yorkshire	59.3	71.1	53.6	65.4	52.5	65.4	53.7	66.8
Surrey and Sussex	48.9	71.0	41.9	66.0	40.6	65.3	40.4	65.7
Thames Valley	37.4	65.1	31.3	60.2	31.2	60.5	31.5	61.2
Trent	53.4	65.5	48.5	61.0	47.9	61.7	48.8	62.7
West Midland South	53.2	67.2	45.2	61.7	43.5	62.8	42.8	61.7
West Yorkshire	58.7	64.9	52.2	60.1	51.1	60.0	51.2	61.0

Strategic health authority	2001		2002		2003		2004	
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	38.7	68.3	37.5	66.9	37.4	66.7	36.0	63.9
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	43.4	60.8	44.0	61.5	43.4	61.1	42.4	59.3
Birmingham and the Black Country	46.7	52.4	47.0	52.8	47.2	53.1	48.1	53.4
Cheshire and Merseyside	50.2	62.3	50.2	62.2	49.7	61.9	26.7	33.3
County Durham and Tees Valley	53.0	64.8	53.1	64.6	53.0	64.4	53.0	62.8
Cumbria and Lancashire	45.9	61.8	45.3	61.0	44.5	59.9	35.7	50.6
Dorset and Somerset	47.4	70.2	48.2	71.0	46.9	69.2	44.8	66.8
Essex	44.3	60.4	44.3	60.3	43.6	59.1	44.0	58.8
Greater Manchester	51.3	64.6	50.2	63.5	48.9	62.3	37.6	48.2
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	41.3	62.0	40.0	61.9	37.5	61.3	32.4	54.8
Kent and Medway	37.8	61.6	37.1	61.5	36.1	60.2	36.4	60.0
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	46.9	60.4	46.1	60.7	46.2	60.8	48.3	62.4
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	47.4	64.0	47.5	63.6	46.6	62.8	46.8	61.9
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	47.0	66.3	46.1	64.9	45.2	63.7	38.3	54.8
North Central London	38.9	50.7	38.1	50.2	37.9	50.7	36.9	49.8
North East London	35.8	44.1	35.7	44.3	35.8	45.1	36.1	45.0
North West London	38.8	51.6	38.4	51.2	38.7	51.0	34.4	45.1
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	50.4	65.0	50.3	64.4	51.1	64.8	50.6	60.8
Shropshire and Staffordshire	38.2	62.9	38.0	62.5	37.0	61.8	34.7	57.8
South East London	35.5	50.1	36.0	51.8	36.0	52.4	35.9	52.5
South West London	35.5	53.5	33.9	54.1	34.4	54.9	32.6	52.8
South West Peninsula	43.4	67.6	42.8	65.8	42.2	65.1	22.8	41.1
South Yorkshire	53.6	66.1	53.7	65.5	53.6	65.4	41.0	49.4
Surrey and Sussex	40.1	65.6	39.5	64.9	39.1	64.2	38.1	63.4
Thames Valley	30.5	60.2	31.2	60.6	30.6	60.6	30.1	58.9
Trent	48.6	61.8	48.1	61.8	47.3	61.2	46.6	58.8
West Midland South	43.2	62.2	42.0	61.1	40.8	61.0	40.0	59.5
West Yorkshire	50.4	60.4	49.4	59.5	49.3	59.8	42.1	51.2

Note:
Combined rates for Redbridge and Waltham Forest

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people in each region with no teeth. [199963]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The available information is for the percentage of adults with no natural teeth in 1995 and is in Table 1. Similar information for the year 2003 will be published by the Office for National Statistics on 16 December 2004.

Table 1: Adults with no natural teeth by region in 1995

Percentages

English region	Adults with no natural teeth
North	19
Yorks and Humberside	21
North West	17
East Midlands	14
West Midlands	15
East Anglia	13
Greater London	10
Outer metropolitan area	10
Outer South East	10
South West	11
England	14

Source:
Living in Britain: Results from the 1995 general household survey table 9.11.

Information from the adult dental health survey 1998 for three large regional groupings in England are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Adults with no natural teeth in three regional groupings in 1998

Percentages

English region	Adults with no natural teeth
North	14
Midlands	15
South	10
England	12

Source:
Adult dental health survey 1998 table 2.1.7.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by his Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [200781]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not routinely identify all leasing expenditure and cannot provide this confirmation without incurring disproportionate costs.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what creche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [200784]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not provide creche facilities for its staff.

There is an on site nursery for members of staff at the Department's Leeds office, which is provided at the rate of £24 per day and is shared with members of staff at the Department of Work and Pensions.

For other members of staff, the Department provides childcare allowances towards the cost of nursery and out of school care. It also provides an on-site holiday playscheme subsidised at the rate of £10 per day for

children of staff members who are of school age, during the holidays. The budget for the allowances and for running the playscheme last year was £220,000.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of refurbishing each Ministerial Private Office was in the last two years. [200789]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of refurbishing Department's Ministerial Private Offices in the last two years was £15,000 in 2002–03 and £70,000 in 2003–04.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [200790]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of building refurbishment to the Department of Health's administrative estate was £1,978,000 in 2002–03 and £2,840,000 in 2003–04.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [200793]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not incurred any costs in the last two years because of criminal damage.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [200795]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's accounting system does not collect information in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202157]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Details of numbers and users of central Departmental mobile phones are not kept on an annual basis. Information is, therefore, available only on the current position. There are 1,102 mobile phones currently in use, of which nine are used by Ministers and special advisers and 1,093 by officials.

The costs of the equipment, call charges and line rental in each financial year since 2001–02 are shown in the table. Figures for the years 1997–98 to 2000–01 are not available.

Financial year	*Costs (£)*
2001–02	270,000
2002–03	280,000
2003–04	304,000
2004–05	[1]218,000

[1] Figure to date.

Numbers of mobile phones lost and stolen and their cost are shown in the table. Departmental records do not differentiate between lost and stolen mobile phones.

Financial year	*Numbers lost/stolen*	*Replacement purchase cost (£)*
1997–98	19	769
1998–99	19	691
1999–2000	26	557
2000–01	43	1,332
2001–02	37	987
2002–03	37	2,693
2003–04	29	1,954
2004–05	9	[1]937

[1] Figure to date.

Departmental Pay

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [200782]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department undertook an audit of the pay of staff below senior civil service level in 2003. This revealed no significant areas of concern and concluded that there was no evidence of gender bias in respect of starting salaries. The Department's managers are required to consider equal pay issues when considering both starting salary and awarding any pay flexibilities.

The Department is currently reviewing its pay strategy and will ensure that any future strategy continues to avoid a gender bias.

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospital

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospital has received in each year since the hospitals were merged. [201739]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Income for the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Trust from 2001–02 to 2002–03 is shown in the table.

	Income (£)
2001–02	161,938,000
2002–03	178,597,000
2003–04	192,778,000

Note:
NHS trusts do not normally receive funding direct from the Department, but receive income for service provision largely from primary care trusts. Figures above show the total income of the trust, including all income from activities and all other operating income.

Sources:
Audited summarisation schedules of the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals National Health Service Trust 2001–02 to 2003–04.

Energy Costs

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of recent large wholesale gas prices on the energy costs of the NHS; and what effect this will have on frontline services. [200556]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The price of gas has risen by approximately 57 per cent. between 1 November 2003 and 1 November 2004. This equates to a cost increase of about £41 million per annum, including Value Added Tax, on the national contracts.

Gene Therapy

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will commission research to investigate the results of the gene therapy research referred to in the Gene Therapy Advisory Committee's open letter of 5 November, concerning the development of liver tumours in mice when treated with a lentivial vector. [201136]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have recently spent £1 million of funding to support academic research into the safety of gene therapy, which includes looking at the safety of retroviruses of which lentiviruses are a sub-type.

There are no plans to commission additional research to investigate the results of the gene therapy research referred to in the gene therapy advisory committee's open letter of 5 November.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which research group conducted the gene therapy research referred to in the Gene Therapy Advisory Committee's open letter of 5 November concerning liver tumours in mice treated with a lentivial vector; [201140]

(2) who funded the research referred to in the Gene Therapy Advisory Committee's open letter of 5 November concerning liver tumours in mice. [201141]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The research referred to in the Gene Therapy Advisory Committee's open letter of 5 November 2004 was conducted at Imperial College London at the division of biomedical sciences (cell and molecular biology section). The group is funded by contributions from a variety of sources, such as a Medical Research Council programme grant, the Katherine Dormandy Trust and the United Kingdom based biopharmacetical company Oxford BioMedica.

GP Fundholding

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on differences between practice-based commissioning and GP fundholding. [202225]

Mr. Hutton: Practice Based commissioning lacks Fundholding's inequitable distribution of resources, will involve competition on quality rather than price and any savings from Practice Based Commissioning will be directly invested in patient services.

Health Direct

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the *(a)* costs of establishing and *(b)* running costs of Health Direct. [199479]

Miss Melanie Johnson: An announcement concerning the cost of Health Direct will be made in due course.

Health Promotion

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the first pilot on the effectiveness on promoting health and well-being through the workplace, as described in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 25, to be established. [199448]

Miss Melanie Johnson: "Choosing Health—Making healthier choices easier" sets out a range of initiatives to improve activity levels.

The Big Lottery Fund, the British Heart Foundation and Sport England are currently in the process of selecting the first wave of pilots which will commence in 2005. Full details will be published in due course.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of the Healthy Start communications campaign, as defined in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 38; [199464]

(2) what the cost to date has been on publicity campaigns for the Welfare Food Scheme. [199465]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The welfare food scheme has been in existence since 1940 and information campaigns have been run periodically. The most recent communication campaign was to promote the new application process for pregnant women, introduced on 1 October 2004, that provides greater opportunities for healthcare professionals to offer pregnant women advice on diet and nutrition. This campaign, which is the first stage of the reform of the welfare food scheme, cost £78,923, including the distribution of the materials through the waiting room information service.

To support this new application procedure and the implementation of "Healthy Start", we published an infant feeding and child nutrition resource pack on 26 November 2004 that has been distributed to all members of the Royal College of Midwives and the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association. We are currently drawing up further plans for a comprehensive communications campaign to promote "Healthy Start" to parents, health professionals and food outlets. The implementation of this and a number of other initiatives announced will be in a delivery plan for the White Paper to be published early in 2005.

Healthy Eating

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ensure that all primary care trusts work with other relevant bodies to develop a healthy food policy for their area. [201881]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The White Paper "Choosing Health" identifies a healthy diet as one of the priorities for preventing ill health in future as part of our new approach to public health. We aim to publish a delivery plan early in 2005, which will give details on implementing the commitments made in the White Paper, including the particular roles and responsibilities for health improvement of all health organisations. As part of this delivery programme, we will also publish a delivery plan for food and health.

Hospital Infections

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital trusts in England have equipment to identify MRSA on admission to hospital. [200889]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the equipment used in trusts is not collected centrally. All national health service trusts have access to microbiology laboratory facilities that can identify methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus by traditional culture methods. Newer rapid screening methods are being developed and may be used in some trusts.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200621]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not analyse its records in a way which would readily show the average time taken to pay invoices. 93.29 per cent. of all invoices, in the year November 2003 to October 2004, were paid within 30 days.

Currently 0.14 per cent. of invoices remain unpaid after 90 days.

The Department's policy is that; where there is no contractual provision or other understanding or accepted practice governing the time of payment, the Department should pay within 30 days of receipt of goods and services, or of the presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand for payment, whichever is the later.

Laryngectomy Patients

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which items are available on prescription to laryngectomy patients; [200273]

(2) what mechanisms are in place to inform general practitioners of the availability of items on prescription, with particular reference to laryngectomy patients.[200274]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Part IXA of the drug tariff lists tracheostomy and laryngectomy appliances that are available on prescription to national health service patients.

General practitioners receive a copy of the drug tariff on a monthly basis through their primary care trust.

Making Amends

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the Government's response to the Making Amends consultation. [203143]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Consultation ended on 17 October 2003. The responses are being used to help further develop detailed policy proposals. An announcement will be made in due course.

Mental Illness (Smoking Cessation)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people suffering from mental illness have been referred to NHS Smoking Cessation programmes. [203195]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

NHS Plus Services

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the costs of increasing availability of NHS Plus services described in the "Choosing Health" White Paper. [202270]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The services of NHS Plus occupational health departments are provided on a commercial basis. Any surplus funds over and above the cost of supplying services may be used to expand the activities of NHS Plus. NHS Plus is run as an income generation scheme in accordance with the guidance issued in the national health service finance manual, "NHS Trusts—Detailed Guidance" chapter 30. It is not anticipated that increasing the availability of NHS Plus services will be a cost to the Department.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Department will take to audit NHS Plus services. [202280]

Ms Rosie Winterton: NHS Plus is the title under which about 100 trusts sell occupational health services to non-national health service employers, largely focused on small and medium sized enterprises. Each of the occupational health departments providing these services audits its own work in accordance with the clinical governance arrangements of the trust. The Department does not collect centrally, audit data from individual trusts.

Obesity

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish his Department's response to the Third Report of the Health Select Committee of Session 2003–04, HC23, on Obesity; and for what reason his Department has been unable to supply a response within the six month time limit understood by convention. [202742]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government's response will be published shortly.

A substantive response could only be published following the completion of the public health White Paper "Choosing Health".

GPs (Recruitment)

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress he is making in recruiting more general practitioners. [202220]

Mr. Hutton: In June 2004 there were 31,215 GPs (excluding retainers, registrars and locums) working for the NHS. This is an increase of 3,169 (11.3 per cent.) since 1997.

Timber

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of the central point of expertise on timber. [201260]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department supports the initiative to set up the central point of expertise on timber (CPET). We are committed to purchasing from sustainable sources and we purchase our wooden furniture from companies that meet the highest environmental standards.

However, the Department's requirement for construction timber is minimal and is not likely to increase in the foreseeable near future. We have to concentrate resources on issues that directly relate to health. As the CPET does not meet this criterion, the Department is not able to contribute at the present time.

Mental Health (Wycombe)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether Wycombe Primary Care Trust intends to discontinue making placements to employment schemes provided by Wycombe Mind; [203085]

(2) what day services previously available to people with mental health problems at Harlow House in High Wycombe have been withdrawn in the last 12 months. [203086]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", supported by national service frameworks, it is now for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to plan, develop and improve services for local people, subject to their assessment of local need.

We recognise that health services are better when management is devolved to the frontline. Within the framework set out in the "NHS Plan" and other policy documents, PCTs, with their specialised knowledge of the local community are effectively able to manage and improve local services.

I therefore suggest that the hon. Member liaises directly with the local national health service.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 8 December 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the outcome was of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 22 and 23 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [199752]

Margaret Beckett: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary and I represented the United Kingdom at a meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on 22 and 23 November 2004. The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Ministers with responsibility for agriculture and fisheries were also present.

The Council opened on the first day in office of the new Commission. The Council welcomed Commissioners Mariann Fischer-Boel, Markos Kyprianou and Joe Borg to their new posts.

The Presidency secured qualified majority support for a political agreement on a compromise text updating the current rules on the welfare of animals during transport. I supported the proposal, which contains significant improvements to the current rules, including a strengthening of the enforcement rules in Europe, stricter rules for journeys of more than eight hours and new rules for the transport of horses. The proposal also sets out a clear timetable for the review of the new rules together with a commitment to address the issue of journey times, space allowances and rest periods no later than four years after they have come into effect.

The Council had a lengthy exchange of views on reform in the sugar sector, based on the Commission's communication of July 2004. The Commission indicated that it would not make formal proposals until May or June next year when the result of the EU's appeal against a WTO panel ruling on the sugar regime had been received. The Commission would press for political agreement before the WTO Ministerial scheduled for Hong Kong in December 2005. A majority of member states were critical of the Commission's approach thus far and argued for minimal change, principally aimed at maintaining production in all those areas of the EU where it is currently found. I argued that the current regime was unsustainable and that reform was inescapable. The EU needed to honour its external obligations and I welcomed the Commission's commitment to bringing forward a draft action plan for assistance to the ACP countries by the end of the year.

In a brief discussion of the rural development and CAP financing proposals, there was general support for the rural development measures, although concerns were expressed on a number of specific issues such as the proposed structure for the new regulation and the treatment of less favoured areas. I stressed the importance of further transfers to Pillar 2 measures, the case for a more objective allocation of funds and the need for equitable treatment of the non-euro member states. Discussion will continue at official level.

The Presidency drew attention to its initiative for member states to co-operate on agricultural research in order to avoid duplication and to maximise value for money. I supported this initiative and expressed our readiness to co-operate with Luxembourg in taking it forward next year.

Under Other Business, Estonia described its problems relating to a Russian ban on imports of plant material. Spain called for collaboration with Morocco in the field of animal health, Germany asked the Commission to bring forward legislation on the marketing of seeds of plant varieties of conservation importance, and Slovakia requested funding under the natural disasters heading following gales in the High Tatras national park.

The Commission reported progress in the bilateral negotiations on a 2005 fisheries agreement with Norway. Good progress had been made in a first round of negotiations on 15–19 November, including provisional agreement on some of the more contentious issues. My hon. Friend and other member states congratulated the Commission on progress so far while underlining the importance of concluding the negotiations rapidly so that EU fishermen are able to fish in Norway waters from 1 January.

The Council had a first debate on the Commission's proposals for a European Fisheries Fund (to replace the existing fund for structural improvements in the fisheries sector from 2007). My hon. Friend made clear that the proposal from certain other member states that this should provide for subsidies for fleet renewal would mean going back on a key plank of the 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and was not acceptable. Discussions will continue next year.

The Council reached agreement by qualified majority on a proposal to allocate quotas to deep sea species to certain new member states, based on a presidency compromise tabled at the meeting. Although the compromise went some way towards requests from the United Kingdom and others that new allocations should be on the same basis as allocation to the EU15, the UK abstained in the vote because the proposal had not cleared Parliamentary Scrutiny and because the Government have concerns about the management regime for deep sea species.

The Council held a discussion on management measures for fisheries in the Baltic Sea.

Countryside Access (Consultation)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she intends to publish the results of her consultation on four-wheel drive vehicles and access to the countryside on by-ways open to all traffic. [202061]

Alun Michael: I intend to publish the response to the consultation on the "Use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way" in January.

Departmental Expenditure

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what budget has been set by her Department for *(a)* consumption of resources and *(b)* capital spending for (i) environmental protection, (ii) animal health and welfare, (iii) food, farming and fisheries, (iv) land use and rural affairs, (v) departmental operations, (vi) the Rural Payments Agency and (vii) other executive agencies for (A) 2005–06, (B) 2006–07 and (C) 2007–08. [202039]

Alun Michael: The 2004 departmental report (Cm 6219) shows financial breakdowns for departmental spending up to 2005–06. The information includes how budgets are allocated to deliver the department's functions and objectives. At present, final internal management decisions on budgets for 2006–07 and 2007–08 (plus revisions to 2005–06) are still being made. The next departmental report due to be published in spring 2005, will set out information on budgets up to 2007–08 and reflect any organisational changes which have been made over the last year.

Gangmasters

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 is expected to come fully into force. [199441]

Alun Michael: Since the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act received Royal Assent in July 2004, a Commencement Order has been laid before Parliament bringing into effect from 1 December 2004 those provisions in the Act which relate to the establishment of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority. Consultation on the draft Gangmaster Licensing Authority Regulations has been completed and it is anticipated that the regulations will be presented to the House for consideration immediately after Christmas. If the House is content, it should be possible to legally establish the Licensing Authority by 1 April 2005.

Once established, the authority will need to develop and put in place licensing arrangements. This will include work to develop the conditions to be attached to a licence and the associated audit and compliance arrangements. We are working with stakeholders to ensure that the authority will be in a position to make early progress on these issues. We hope that the authority can start dealing with the first round of licence applications in 2005 with a view to completing the process of issuing first licences by mid 2006.

In the mean time, the Code of Practice launched recently by the Ethical Trading Initiative Temporary Labour Working Group, provides an important opportunity for the whole food chain to show its commitment to a reduction in worker exploitation while work on the introduction of the statutory licensing arrangements proceeds in parallel.

Once the first round of licence applications have been dealt with we will bring the offence of operating as a gangmaster without a licence into effect. At this stage all gangmasters will need to be licensed.

Land Reform

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for reform of land ownership in England. [202060]

Alun Michael: None.

Roadside Lighting

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the reduction in *(a)* electricity use and *(b)* carbon dioxide emissions if all roadside lighting in the UK were to switch to LED illuminations. [202069]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The light output and efficiency of high intensity light emitting diodes (LEDs) can now equal or better that of incandescent lamps. However, the light output is still significantly less than the gas discharge light sources used for street lighting, for example high pressure sodium. At present both electricity consumption and carbon dioxide emissions would increase if the UK switched to LEDs for street lighting.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the total *(a)* electricity use and *(b)* carbon dioxide emissions produced by (i) roadside street lighting and (ii) other public illumination of roadside signage in the last year for which figures are available. [202070]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

Street lighting in England is the responsibility of local highway authorities in respect of local roads and the Highways Agency in respect of the trunk road network. The electricity supply for public lighting is not normally metered, but is based on notional lamp wattages and hours of use. The actual electricity consumption is therefore unknown. It is for local highway authorities to decide whence to source their electricity supply so, even if the power consumption could be established, calculations about the carbon dioxide emissions produced by street lighting would be impossible without knowing what proportion of authorities have contracted for "green" energy sources.

Rural Funding

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how rural funding under the single farm payment will be implemented. [200418]

Alun Michael: The CAP reform package agreed in June 2003 allows modulated funds to be compulsorily transferred from farming subsidies to agri-environment and other rural development schemes in all EU member states. A 3 per cent. rate of compulsory EU modulation will apply to subsidy payments in 2005 rising to 5 per cent. from 2007. In addition the UK

secured agreement to allow an additional voluntary modulation rate to be levied over and above the EU rate.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications for rural areas of the new rural funding scheme, with particular reference to North Yorkshire. [200419]

Alun Michael: As part of the Rural Strategy 2004 we announced a simplified funding framework which will be clearly focused on the key targets set out by the Secretary of State, particularly deprivation or social exclusion in rural areas and underperforming rural economies. Delivery will be devolved as much as possible. As a result of our work on the rural database, Defra funding will be better targeted at priorities, with greater regional partnership working and prioritisation. Customers and the public will face a less confusing situation and will receive better information and support in their dealings with our delivery agencies.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which body will be the delivery body for the new rural funding scheme. [200420]

Alun Michael: The new rural funding framework we announced in Rural Strategy 2004 will have three core funds designed to support three departmental priorities. They are: sustainable rural communities; sustainable farming and food; and natural resource protection. Each will have a grant funding and a core (organisational capacity) funding element. In this framework, Regional Development Agencies will take the lead on regeneration and socio-economic funding, support for the rural voluntary and community sector will rest primarily with Rural Community Councils and their partners, supported by Government Offices, while the new Integrated Agency (also announced in Rural Strategy 2004) will deliver natural resource protection and environmental land-management funding.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications for parish plans of the streamlining process for rural funding. [200421]

Alun Michael: In Rural Strategy 2004 we announced that we would simplify our funding framework with delivery devolved as much as possible with parish and town councils playing an important role at the local level. The value of parish plans has been enhanced by the attention and support given to the work of parish and town councils by Ministers and officials at ODPM and Defra, not least through the qualification of clerks and the QUALITY Parish and Town Councils scheme. Having been promoted through pilot schemes on our behalf by the Countryside Agency, we are now working to "mainstream" the parish plan approach and to support further development through the future funding framework.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by her Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200392]

Alun Michael: The responses to parts *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)* of this question for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 are contained in the summary table.

These details relate only to the core corporate courses delivered by external training providers.

Defra is fully committed to providing access to training for its staff to enable them to deliver Defra's business and to develop them to their full potential.

Course title	*Number*	*Cost (£)*	*Location of courses*
Administrative Grades Development	26	81,344	Surrey, Bournemouth, Preston, York
Advanced Presentation Skills	5	9,950	London
Advanced Writing Skills	14	18,200	York, London
Assertiveness, Pressure and Time Management	18	19,800	London, York, Worcester
Basic Guide to the European Union	6	5,400	York, London
Be a Better Manager	42	745,919	Derby, London, York, Worcester, Bristol
Bespoke Administrative Skills	19	43,700	York, London, Reading, Crewe
Bespoke Change Skills	34	78,200	London, York, Bournemouth, Workington, Cambridge
Bespoke European Union	26	23,400	London, York
Bespoke Writing for Ministers	17	28,900	York, London, Bristol, Weybridge
Bespoke Skills	26	88,400	York, Workington, London, Taunton
Bespoke Writing at Work	32	41,600	London, York, Workington
Bite Size Learning	24	60,000	Workington, Reading, Exeter, London, Crewe, Nottingham, York
Buddying	15	75,000	London
Chairing a Meeting	17	10,200	London, York, Worcester
Competence Based Interviewing	41	82,000	London, Polwhele
Diversity and Equality for Specialists SCS	21	66,499	Cambridge, London, York, Worcester
Diversity and Equality Workshops	173	138,400	London, York, Cambridge, Leeds, Reading, Leicester, Alnwick, Taunton, Exeter, Bristol, Carlisle
Effective and Rapid Reading	7	18,021	London, York
Diversity for Grades 3 to 6	3	4,614	London
European Union Negotiating	1	3,326	London
Getting Your Message Across	7	10,276	London, Worcester
How to get the most from your email	10	7,830	Cambridge, Crewe, York, Exeter, London
Introduction to Agriculture	1	619	London
Influencing Skills	19	29,640	York, London
Interpersonal Skills	24	52,412	London, York, Leeds, Cambridge
Introduction to the European Union	9	81,000	London, York

Course title	Number	Cost (£)	Location of courses
Minutes of Meetings	25	15,000	London, York, Worcester, Leeds, Cambridge
Managing and Making Change Happen	50	479,500	York, Worcester, Derby, Bournemouth, Harrogate, London
New Entrant Induction	103	280,689	London, York, Guildford, Worcester, Reading, Bristol, Taunton, Exeter, Leicester, Derby
New Managers	97	535,573	Worcester, Bournemouth, London, York, Derby, Guildford, Bristol, Exeter, Leicester
Performance Appraisal Management	812	544,382	London, York, Worcester, Leicester, Gloucester, Edinburgh, Reading, Bristol, Derby, Exeter
Personal Development for EOs	4	31,248	Preston, Bournemouth, Guildford, Midlands, London
Performance Appraisal Training	350	267,943	All Defra locations
Presentation Skills	12	29,940	London, Worcester,
Principled Practical Leadership	20	828,843	Oxford, London
Project Awareness	9	55,800	London
Project Management	9	18,000	London, York
Promotion Board Interviewing Skills	1	2,000	London
Senior Civil Service Interviewing Skills	2	4,000	London
Selection Board Interviewing Skills	8	48,000	Weybridge, London, Worcester
Staff Reporting and Appraisal	5	6,000	London, Cambridge
Strategic Leadership	1	4,500	London
Stress Awareness	11	15,400	York, Worcester, London
Supervisory Skills for AOs	21	84,000	Leeds, Worcester, London, York
Women Managers Development	13	31,514	York, London
Writing at Work	23	27,600	Leeds, York, London, Cambridge
Writing for Ministers	23	18,400	Cambridge, York, London
Total	2,236	5,152,982	—

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200412]

Alun Michael: The total financial penalties paid equates to 1.4 per cent. of the £5,152,982 total spent on core corporate learning and development in Defra during financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04.

	Cost (£)
2000–01	14,577.28
2001–02	[1]46,148.75
2002–03	727.66
2003–04	11,147.75
Total	72,601.44

[1] The increased penalties paid in financial year 2001–02 can largely be attributed to the disruption to staff caused by the foot and mouth crisis.

TRANSPORT

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202422]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department's commitment not to discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age is set out clearly in its equal opportunities policy.

We are undertaking a study of the implications for the Department of the forthcoming legislation on age discrimination. Following the study we will prepare a programme of diversity/equality training for managers, and guidance addressing age discrimination.

We have taken steps to introduce flexibility around retirement age: members of the Department below the Senior Civil Service now have the option to remain in work until 65.

Bus Shelters

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on the *(a)* replacement and *(b)* repair of damaged bus shelters in each of the last three years. [202772]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport does not collect the information requested. The maintenance of bus shelters is a matter for local transport authorities and their private sector partners.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many new bus shelters have been built in each year since 1996–97; how many shelters were upgraded in each year; and how many have been removed during that time. [202773]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport does not collect information of the sort requested. An answer could, therefore, be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202427]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the then Under-Secretary of State on 21 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1231W, to the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink).

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201691]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department's main publicity campaign is the THINK! road safety campaign, which is promoted primarily through TV and radio advertising. We have placed very little press advertising to support THINK! since the Department was formed in 2002 and did not target Muslim newspapers specifically.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202169]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The Department for Transport was created on 29 May 2002. It is not possible to provide figures before this date.

The number of mobile phones used by Ministers and special advisers is as follows:

	Ministers	*Special advisers*
2002	3	2
2003	4	2
2004	4	2

As the Department does not maintain central records of mobile phones it is not possible to provide further information except at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Telephones

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their personal use for (i) domestic calls and (ii) international calls; and if he will make a statement. [201079]

Charlotte Atkins: Staff have guidance setting out their responsibilities not to misuse the telephone, e-mail and internet systems. In order to ensure that the systems are not abused and that the Department's security is not compromised, the Department may monitor, calls from time to time.

Access to all international numbers is only granted to staff who have a business need to make such international calls. Calls to premium cost networks such as premium rate numbers and some foreign mobile networks are barred completely.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures have been taken to ensure the telephones in his Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [201080]

Charlotte Atkins: Access to all international numbers is only granted to staff who have a business need to make such international calls. Daily call logging reports are provided which highlight the longest and highest cost calls. As a result, some staff have been made to refund the cost of high cost personal calls. Calls to premium cost networks, such as premium rate numbers and some foreign mobile networks, are barred completely.

Driving Tests

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average length of time is between receipt of an application for a *(a)* theory driving test and *(b)* practical driving test and the date of the test in (i) Southwark, (ii) Greater London and (iii) England; and if he will make a statement. [203392]

Mr. Jamieson: The information is as follows:

(a) Theory Tests

Days

Centre/area	*Average time between booking and test (A)*	*Average time between preferred date and test (B)*
Southwark	25	7
London and south east area	20	4
England	18	2

Many candidates prefer to book their theory test some time in advance, as the above data illustrates. Therefore, the average time between booking date and test (shown in column (A)) does not represent the length of time candidates must wait before they may take a test. The average waiting time is more accurately reflected by measuring the number of days between appointment date requested and appointed date allocated (column (B)).

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) does not analyse data for Greater London as a discrete area. Figures given, therefore, relate to the London and south east area.

(b) Practical Car Tests

Centre/area	*Average waiting time (weeks)*
Hither Green DTC	10
South Norwood DTC	11
London and south east area	10.4
Great Britain	7.5

There is no practical driving test centre (DTC) at Southwark. The nearest test centres are located at Hither Green and South Norwood. DSA does not analyse data for Greater London as a discrete area. Figures given, therefore, relate to the London and south east area. Data for practical tests is not readily available for England as distinct from other countries in Great Britain. DSA has a target to maintain a national average waiting time for car practical tests of six weeks and is seeking to reduce the current figure to target.

Lifeline Flights

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the areas in the UK that should benefit from public service obligations for lifeline flights. [202683]

Charlotte Atkins: The Government have recently consulted with stakeholders on the interpretation of the criteria outlined in the European Regulation governing Public Service Obligations (PSOs). We aim to publish guidance next year on the interpretation of those criteria in establishing PSOs to London airports.

Motorways

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the *(a)* lane closure and *(b)* roadworks on the M62 between junctions 35 and 38 will finish. [201876]

Mr. Jamieson: The roadworks on the M62 between junctions 35 and 38 are currently being carried out using a contraflow system. The westbound carriageway is closed and traffic is being directed onto the eastbound carriageway.

In the week commencing 6 December there will be a lane two and three closure eastbound in place followed by a westbound lane three closure. The roadworks are due for completion on 10 December, subject to weather conditions.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the first motorway picnic area to be operative under the provisions of clause 40 of the Road Safety Bill. [203081]

Mr. Jamieson: Once the Road Safety Bill has completed its passage through Parliament, the Secretary of State for Transport will have the authority under Clause 40 to establish a motorway rest area. It is expected that this could be by July 2005. The first picnic area could then be operative, subject to obtaining the appropriate planning consents and the availability of funding, by summer 2008.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many motorway services are operating; and what plans the Government has to increase the number. [203075]

Mr. Jamieson: There are currently 69 motorway service areas operating in England. Since 1992 it has been Government policy that the private sector should be responsible for bringing forward proposals for motorway service stations through the planning system. Consequently, any increase in the number of motorway service areas would be through commercial development.

Railways

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what impact the designation of the Grantham to Skegness branch line as a Community Rail Line pilot will have on *(a)* maintenance funding, *(b)* service improvement, *(c)* freight traffic and *(d)* improving facilities at stations along the line. [202908]

Mr. McNulty: The Grantham to Skegness line is proposed as a pilot scheme under the Government's Community Rail Development Strategy. The objectives of the strategy are to provide a strategic framework for local and rural lines within which they can develop and be put on a sustainable basis for the medium to long term through increasing ridership, freight use and net revenue, managing costs down and greater involvement from the local community. The purpose of the pilot projects is to test the deliverability of these objectives. The scope of each pilot will be determined as the remit for each is developed with the relevant local authorities, Rail Passengers Committee, rail operators and other funding partners.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what provisions are available to support existing community rail line projects should they fail to secure adequate funding through businesses, charities and Government agencies. [201981]

Mr. McNulty: Support for services on lines proposed for designation as Community Railways is provided through the franchise agreement with the relevant train operator. It is always open to stakeholders along a rail corridor to provide additional support for the further development of the local rail service, such as more services or enhancement projects. One of the aims of the Community Rail Development Strategy is to provide a structure for making use of such resources.

Road Safety

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in accidents on the roads where alcohol was a contributory factor in each of the last five years; in what percentage of road traffic accidents alcohol was a contributory factor, in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [202904]

Mr. Jamieson: Estimates of the number of casualties in accidents where at least one driver was over the legal drink drive limit are shown in the following table.

Estimates of casualties in accidents involving illegal alcohol levels: GB 1999–2003[1]

Casualties/accidents/percentages

			Drink drive accidents		
	Number killed	*Number injured*[2]	*Drink/drive accidents*	*All accidents*	*Drink/drive as percentage of all accidents*
1999	460	16,450	11,050	235,048	4.7
2000	530	17,530	11,800	233,729	5.0
2001	530	18,240	12,270	229,014	5.4
2002	550	19,550	13,150	221,751	5.9
2003[1]	560	18,450	12,400	214,030	5.8

[1] Provisional data.

[2] Includes serious and slight casualties.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost was to each police authority of policing accidents in which alcohol was a contributory factor in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [202905]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what evidence he has assessed that shows that drivers who use speed assessment equipment detection devices have a worse accident record than those who do not; [202164]

(2) what evidence he has assessed which shows that the provisions of Clause 17 of the Road Safety Bill will enhance road safety. [202165]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Clause 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to prohibit the fitting of, or the use of vehicles carrying, speed assessment equipment detection devices. It defines such devices as a device one or more of whose purposes is to interfere with or detect the operation of equipment used to assess the speed of motor vehicles. The precise subset of the devices which will be prohibited will be identified in regulations.

The Government do not intend to prohibit the use of equipment which usefully gives drivers information on the location of published camera sites and does not detect or interfere with the operation of speed assessment equipment. Thus complementing the measures we took in 2001 to ensure that camera sites are visible and conspicuous to drivers, and so help deter excessive and inappropriate speeds on the roads.

The sole purpose of detection devices to be covered by the proposed law is to tell drivers when they can break speed limits and get away with it. This is unacceptable, prevents the police from carrying out their duties, and is a danger to other law-abiding drivers and road users.

There is overwhelming evidence from both UK and international literature that speeding results in more collisions and more severe casualties. As regards safety cameras, the evidence from the independent review of the safety camera programme by University College London and PA Consulting found that cameras significantly reduced the number of people killed or seriously injured at camera sites. This evidence demonstrates why the provisions of Clause 17 of the Bill would enhance road safety.

Rural Bus Services

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding will be provided for rural bus services in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [200294]

Charlotte Atkins: Allocations from this Department to local authorities of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant (RBSG) will total £53 million in 2005–06. We have recently written to local authorities advising them of their individual allocations.

The provisional RBSG totals for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are £54.3 million and £55.6 million respectively.

In addition, expenditure on existing Rural Bus Challenge projects is estimated to total £38 million over the next three years.

Local authorities also support rural bus services using funds from their Revenue Support Grant.

Stations (Crime)

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many crimes have been committed at stations that meet secure station status in each year since the scheme's inception. [202766]

Mr. McNulty: The British Transport Police have provided the following information on crimes recorded at stations in the secure stations scheme, for any given year in the period 2000–04 when a station held accreditation. Data is not readily available for earlier than 2000.

	Crimes recorded at secure stations	*Number of secure stations*
2000–01	16,351	84
2001–02	22,735	128
2002–03	30,077	167
2003–04	31,815	174
1 April 2004–31 October 2004	17,908	168

In reading the above data, the following factors should be considered:

(i) These figures contain all crimes—this includes both notifiable and non-notifiable crimes. The latter includes byelaw offences, minor disorder etc.

(ii) The statistics represent full year data not data from the time of accreditation.

(iii) The data refers to crimes discovered and reported at the Station (i.e. not actually occurred at the station but in the surrounding area) as well as crimes committed on the station.

(iv) The new crime recording standards were implemented in 2002–03 and will have an adverse impact on crime statistics from that period.

(v) The period of accreditation lasts for two years. A number of listed stations have not applied for re-accreditation and therefore do not now fall under the secure station scheme.

Timber

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the refurbishment projects in his Department's premises that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will be starting in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment also comes from legal and sustainable sources. [201175]

Charlotte Atkins: In the central Department there is only one significant refurbishment project currently under way, or due to begin in the next six months, involving timber products and this is the replacement of furniture, stud partitioning and doors in Great Minster House. For the partitioning and furniture we will be using the call-off contracts managed by OGC which take account of Government polices on sustainable and legal timber. The doors will be modified and re-used.

More generally in the Department purchasers are reminded regularly of the requirement to purchase legal and sustainable timber and are provided with advice to assist them in purchasing sustainable timber, including the Office of Government Commerce Information Notes 9/2002 and 5/2004.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200391]

Charlotte Atkins: The information is not collected centrally in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200411]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department was formed 29 May 2002, so the information in this answer only relates to the period from that date. We are not aware centrally of any financial penalties borne by the Department as a result of cancellation of work prepared by external suppliers.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Leader of the House in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201707]

Mr. Hain: The Privy Council Office provides administrative support for my Office.

My Office does not have a policy of advertising in either the local or national media.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Leader of the House how many written questions for his Office were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201555]

Mr. Hain: Three.

The three questions were tabled in September 2004.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Office between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged. [201376]

Mr. Hain: None.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201423]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Office's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201448]

Mr. Hain: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of "the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers".

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [200828]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department's commitment not to discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age is set out clearly in its equal opportunities policy.

The DfES aspires to be an exemplar equal opportunities employer, creating a workplace that values diversity, is free from any form of unfair discrimination including age, and where all staff have an equal opportunity to meet their aspirations, realise their full potential and improve their life chances.

My Department already allows its staff to remain in employment until the age of 65 and will be reviewing all of its HR policies and practices to take account of the introduction of legislation on age discrimination. My officials monitor the Department's progress to ensure that we are succeeding and will also ensure that all managers and staff are made aware of the new legislation and its implications for the Department.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the local authorities which applied for wave *(a)* 2 and *(b)* 3 of the Building Schools for the Future programme whose bids were not accepted for prioritisation; and if he will make a statement. [202291]

Mr. Miliband: Building Schools for the Future is our long-term programme to provide 21st-century facilities for all secondary pupils. We invited local authorities to submit proposals for wave 1 of Building Schools for the Future and/or expressions of interest for the rest of the programme, including waves 2 and 3. All local authorities with secondary schools did so.

It is our ambition that, by 2011 and subject to public spending reviews, 60 per cent. of all authorities should have major rebuilding or remodelling projects (at least three schools), and that all the others will have the resources to tackle their secondary schools in greatest need (at least one school). By 2016, our ambition is that major rebuilding or remodelling projects (at least three

schools) will have started in every authority. In 15 waves from 2005–06, we aim for every secondary school that needs it to be replaced or upgraded.

The following lists alphabetically local authorities that have expressed interest in being included In Building Schools for the Future and that win be prioritised from wave 4 onwards.

Barking and Dagenham
Barnet
Bath and North-east Somerset
Bedfordshire
Bexley
Blackburn with Darwen
Blackpool
Bolton
Bournemouth
Bracknell Forest
Brent
Brighton and Hove
Bromley
Buckinghamshire
Bury
Calderdale
Cambridgeshire
Camden
Cheshire
Cornwall
Coventry
Croydon
Cumbria
Darlington
Derby
Devon
Doncaster
Dorset
Dudley
Ealing
East Riding of Yorkshire
East Sussex
Enfield
Essex
Gloucestershire
Halton
Hammersmith and Fulham
Hampshire
Harrow
Hartlepool
Havering
Herefordshire
Hertfordshire
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Isle of Wight
Isles of Scilly
Kensington and Chelsea
Kingston upon Thames
Kirklees
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Medway
Merton
Milton Keynes
Norfolk
Northamptonshire
North Somerset
North Tyneside
North Yorkshire
North-east Lincolnshire
Northumberland
Nottinghamshire
Oldham
Oxfordshire
Peterborough
Plymouth
Poole
Portsmouth
Reading
Redbridge
Redcar and Cleveland
Richmond upon Thames
Rochdale
Rotherham
Rutland
St. Helen's
Sefton
Shropshire
Slough
Somerset
South Gloucestershire
Southampton
Southend-on-Sea
Staffordshire
Stockport
Stockton on Tees
Suffolk
Surrey
Sutton
Swindon
Thurrock
Torbay
Telford and Wrekin
Trafford
Wakefield
Walsall
Wandsworth
Warrington
Warwickshire
West Berkshire
West Sussex
Wigan
Wiltshire
Windsor and Maidenhead
Wirral
Wokingham
Wolverhampton
Worcestershire
York

Departmental Pay

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [200829]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department's equal pay analysis of 2002 pay identified no statistically significant variations in pay between genders and the minor differences identified were addressed in the three year pay deal 2003–2005.

My Department's gender analysis of the 2003 pay award identified no sign of any bias in the results.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many extra 16 to 18-year-olds he expects to stay in education as a result of the education maintenance allowance in Cambridge. [201267]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since the start of the academic year, as of 31 October 2004, 1,207 young people in the Cambridgeshire local authority area have received payments under the national EMA scheme. The number is increasing at a steady rate and we expect it to continue to do so. In 2004/05 across England we expect the number of 16 to 18-year-olds participating in education to increase by 35,000 (3.8 percentage points) as a direct result of EMA. By 2006/07, when EMA is available to all eligible 16 to 18-year-olds, an additional 72,000 young people will be in further education. If the same participation increase is applied to the east of England region an additional 7,900 16 to18-year-olds will be participating in further education by 2006/07. Estimates are not available at local authority level.

Education Finance

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills with which companies *(a)* producing and *(b)* distributing video games he has held discussions on financing educational facilities. [203119]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have not held any meetings with companies *(a)* producing or *(b)* distributing video games in which we have discussed any specific proposals for financing educational facilities.

My Department maintains a working relationship with representatives from the games industry and is keen to find opportunities for collaboration, and ways of using games technologies to create innovative educational content.

As part of this overall approach, I hosted a discussion on 2 November 2004 for some of those involved in the video games industry, including relevant trade associations.

School Playing Fields

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school playing fields have been sold in England and Wales in each of the last five years. [201649]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 was introduced in England on 1 October 1998 to stop the indiscriminate sale of school playing fields that occurred in the 1980s and early to mid 1990s. As the legislation only applies to England, we have no records of how many school playing fields have been sold in Wales. The sale of school playing fields in Wales is a matter for the Welsh Assembly.

Applications to sell school playing fields are only approved where it is clear that any proceeds will be used to improve school sports provision or education facilities. All applications made since 16 July 2001 are scrutinised by the independent School Playing Fields Advisory Panel to make sure that they meet our published criteria. The Panel comprises representatives from the National Playing Fields Association, the Central Council of Physical Recreation, Learning through Landscapes, the National Association of Head Teachers and the Local Government Association.

The figures requested are shown in the following table. In 15 of these 109 applications new or replacement sports pitches of the same size or greater were to be bought from the proceeds. A further 41 applications involved land at closed or closing school sites and in 39 of the remaining 53 cases, the proceeds are to be used to improve sports facilities, such as new all-weather pitches, sports halls or improved grass sports pitches. In the remaining 12 cases, the proceeds are to provide better education facilities at schools, such as new classrooms and performing arts facilities.

Calendar year	*Sports pitch applications approved*
2000	32
2001	22
2002	24
2003	17
2004 (to 26 November)	14

Notes:

1. The table comprises applications from local authorities, foundation, voluntary and former grant-maintained schools to sell school playing fields capable of forming at least a small sports pitch.

2. All sale proceeds are to be used to provide new or improved sports or education facilities at maintained schools.

3. "Sports pitch" means an area of open grassed land which is equal to, or larger than, the Football Association's recommended 2,000m^2 area for games played by under-10s and which has a configuration making it suitable for sports, whether laid out as a sports pitch or not.

Vocational Education/Training

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to expand vocational education and training for adults in Cambridge. [201266]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The responsibility for local education and training provision rests with the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom the Council's Chief Executive will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

TREASURY

Census

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the dates since 1 January when he and his Ministers discussed with the Department for Constitutional Affairs the change in revenue that might occur if arrangements were not made immediately to approve an 80-year closure period for decennial population censuses for England and Wales; and what estimate he has made of the *(a)* gross and *(b)* net revenue in the next decade from the 1911 and 1921 censuses being released online as soon as practicable. [202018]

Mr. Timms: It is government policy that all decennial census returns should remain closed for 100 years. This is in order that public confidence continues to be maintained through the confidentiality assurances that are provided when citizens are required to complete their census forms.

It would be premature to consider what revenue might be raised from making the 1911 and 1921 censuses available online so far in advance of their release dates. There have been no meetings between Treasury and DCA Ministers on this matter and it would not be appropriate to prepare revenue estimates at this time.

Departmental Efficiency Technical Notes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which of the departmental Efficiency Technical Notes (ETN) required by the report, "Releasing Resources to the Frontline—Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency", were submitted to *(a)* the National Audit Office and *(b)* the Audit Commission for scrutiny; on what date each first draft was submitted for scrutiny; how many submissions of subsequent drafts there were for each ETN, broken down by Department and on what dates each were submitted; on what date each was signed off by the (i) National Audit Office and (ii) Audit Commission; if he will make a statement on the nature of the outstanding concerns of the National Audit Office and the Audit Commission over those ETNs not yet signed off; and when he expects sign-off to be achieved. [203158]

Mr. Timms: The NAO and Audit Commission provided advice to central Government on draft ETNs submitted by Departments in September 2004, against agreed criteria—clarity of savings, measurement methods, data quality, service continuity, and readability. Departments subsequently published their ETNs at the end of October 2004. The NAO and Audit Commission will be asked to provide further scrutiny but have not been asked to sign off the content of ETNs. The scrutiny covered the main Departments of Government, namely Cabinet Office, Crown Prosecution Service, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Education and Skills, Department for International Development, Department for Transport, Department of Health, Department of Trade and Industry, Department for Work and Pensions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Home Office, HM Revenue and Customs, HM Treasury, Ministry of Defence, Northern Ireland Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (for both main programmes and local government).

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [202489]

Mr. Timms: Information concerning ministerial cars in the financial year 2002–03 was given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 397–98W. The Minister for the Cabinet Office has asked the Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the cost of ministerial vehicles in 2003–04.

Expenditure on taxis is estimated to have been £163,000 in 2002–03 and £151,000 in 2003–04.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [202490]

Mr. Timms: Energy costs in 1 Horse Guards Road reduced by 15 per cent. over the last two years.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [202491]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury, the Office of Government Commerce, the Royal Mint, the Government Actuary's Department, the Debt Management Office, the Office for National Statistics and National Savings and Investments do not own any empty properties.

Inland Revenue, HM Customs and Excise and the Valuation Office Agency sold their freehold properties to Mapeley on 2 April 2001 as part of the STEPS PFI contract. Mapeley have assumed responsibility for these since then, irrespective of whether the properties are empty or occupied.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [202498]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury does not provide any crèche facilities. The Department is a member of the Westminster Holiday Playscheme, which operates during school holidays and is open to children aged 4 years 9 months to 12. The Treasury has two bespoke playscheme rooms, which can cater for up to 18 children. The cost per child is £30 a day and the Treasury subsidises the costs by 60 per cent. The total subsidy to Treasury parents using the playscheme is £4,100.

The Treasury also supports the child care cost of eligible staff. Staff who work full time receive £40.00 per week per family, part timers receive a pro-rated amount.

85 staff members receive child care vouchers. The total cost of child care vouchers, since the scheme was introduced in January 2004 is £134,000.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many people over 65 were in employment in each metropolitan authority and county area in the North East region in each year from 1997 to 2004; [202680]

(2) how many and what percentage of 50 to 65-year-olds were economically inactive in *(a)* the North East region, and *(b)* each (i) metropolitan authority and (ii) county area within the North East region in each year from 1997 to 2003. [202681]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 8 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about employment and economic inactivity. (202680, 202681)

The attached table provides the information requested.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Economic activity in the North East region and each metropolitan authority and county area 12-month period ending in February each year— United Kingdom

1997

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	147	42.0	22
Darlington UA	3	24.7	[4]
Durham UA	31	42.7	4
Gateshead	11	40.7	2
Hartlepool UA	6	44.4	1
Middlesbrough UA	9	55.9	[4]
Newcastle upon Tyne	13	41.1	3
North Tyneside	9	32.5	[4]
Northumberland	16	37.5	5
Redcar and Cleveland UA	10	44.1	1
South Tyneside	8	44.5	2
Stockton-on-Tees UA	9	41.7	1
Sunderland	19	51.1	1

1998

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	153	42.7	19
Darlington UA	5	38.3	[4]
Durham UA	32	44.5	4
Gateshead	12	40.4	2
Hartlepool UA	5	42.3	1
Middlesbrough UA	8	42.1	[4]
Newcastle upon Tyne	15	42.2	3
North Tyneside	10	38.6	1
Northumberland	20	42.9	4
Redcar and Cleveland UA	11	43.9	[4]
South Tyneside	7	35.2	1
Stockton-on-Tees UA	9	37.1	1
Sunderland	20	51.6	1

1999

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	157	42.9	21
Darlington UA	5	33.1	[4]
Durham UA	33	43.6	6
Gateshead	12	42.8	1
Hartlepool UA	5	41.1	[4]
Middlesbrough UA	7	36.5	2
Newcastle upon Tyne	10	33.9	3
North Tyneside	12	38.1	1
Northumberland	19	40.3	4
Redcar and Cleveland UA	12	56.4	[4]
South Tyneside	9	44.3	1
Stockton-on-Tees UA	11	42.0	[4]
Sunderland	22	55.0	1

2000

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	156	41.9	24
Darlington UA	7	38.6	2
Durham UA	29	40.3	6
Gateshead	13	42.4	1
Hartlepool UA	5	37.8	[4]
Middlesbrough UA	7	33.6	1
Newcastle upon Tyne	7	26.2	2
North Tyneside	12	35.5	2
Northumberland	22	43.6	5
Redcar and Cleveland UA	13	59.3	1
South Tyneside	10	43.8	2
Stockton-on-Tees UA	10	43.8	[4]
Sunderland	22	52.1	3

2001

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	150	39.8	23
Darlington UA	5	34.6	1
Durham UA	31	40.1	4
Gateshead	11	37.0	1
Hartlepool UA	6	47.7	1
Middlesbrough UA	8	44.3	1
Newcastle upon Tyne	10	33.7	2
North Tyneside	10	35.1	2
Northumberland	19	37.1	4
Redcar and Cleveland UA	10	44.4	1
South Tyneside	10	45.2	1
Stockton-on-Tees UA	10	36.9	1
Sunderland	20	46.0	2

2002

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	151	39.5	21
Darlington UA	5	36.0	1
Durham UA	33	40.0	4
Gateshead	10	33.1	1

2002

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
Hartlepool UA	5	43.6	1
Middlesbrough UA	8	43.1	1
Newcastle upon Tyne	12	36.2	2
North Tyneside	10	33.5	1
Northumberland	19	37.7	4
Redcar and Cleveland UA	10	42.7	1
South Tyneside	9	43.7	1
Stockton-on-Tees UA	11	39.1	1
Sunderland	19	46.8	2

2003

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	151	39.1	20
Darlington UA	6	37.0	1
Durham UA	35	43.7	3
Gateshead	11	38.4	1
Hartlepool UA	7	47.2	1
Middlesbrough UA	8	46.7	1
Newcastle upon Tyne	14	41.3	2
North Tyneside	10	33.5	1
Northumberland	16	30.3	4
Redcar and Cleveland UA	9	40.9	1
South Tyneside	9	43.6	1
Stockton-on-Tees UA	9	33.2	1
Sunderland	17	39.7	2

2004

	Number of economically inactive people aged 50 to 64 years[1] (000s)	Inactivity rate for people aged 50 to 64 years[2] (%)	Number of people in employment aged 65 years and over[3] (000s)
North East	149	38.4	23
Darlington UA	5	35.6	1
Durham UA	34	41.1	4
Gateshead	11	40.0	2
Hartlepool UA	6	42.8	1
Middlesbrough UA	7	39.6	1
Newcastle upon Tyne	14	40.3	3
North Tyneside	10	35.1	1
Northumberland	15	28.8	4
Redcar and Cleveland UA	10	43.5	1
South Tyneside	10	42.6	1
Stockton-on-Tees UA	9	34.3	1
Sunderland	18	41.8	3

[1] Economically inactive refers to women aged 50 to 59 and men aged 50 to 64 who are neither employed nor unemployed.

[2] The rates are based on people aged 50 to 64 who are economically inactive as percentage of total population in the relevant age group.

[3] Refers to men aged 65 to 99 women aged 60 to 99.

[4] Estimates not available because sample size is too small.

Note:

Some estimates are based on smaller sample sizes and are therefore subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. They should be treated with caution and, in particular, changes from year to year should not be used in isolation from the figures for a run of years.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the employment rate is of women in couples where the woman's partner *(a)* does not work and *(b)* does work. [203166]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Willetts, dated 8 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about employment. I am replying in his absence. (203166)

Among couples who were both of working age (i.e. men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59) the employment rates for the female partners were: *(a)* 42.3% for those whose male partner was not in employment; and *(b)* 79.4% for those whose male partner was in employment.

These estimates come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and apply to the three months ending May 2004. As with any statistical sample survey the LFS estimates are subject to sampling error.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the total amount of relief from inheritance tax granted in respect of agricultural land in North Yorkshire was in each of the past five years; [203356]

(2) in how many cases relief from inheritance tax was granted in North Yorkshire in each of the past five years; [203357]

(3) if he will make a statement on the eligibility criteria for the granting of relief from inheritance tax. [203358]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the number and value of assets relieved of inheritance tax in the UK is published in Table 12.2 of Inland Revenue Statistics 2004 at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/inheritance_tax/table12-2.xls/. A regional breakdown is not available.

The eligibility criteria for inheritance tax reliefs depend on the particular relief. Agricultural property relief is available for land (including qualifying farmhouses and cottages) which has been owned by the transferor, and occupied for farming, for at least seven years, or two years for owner occupiers. Inland Revenue booklet IHT17 gives more information and is available at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/leaflets/iht.htm.

International Finance Facility

Tony Baldry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* G7 and *(b)* G21 countries need to support the International Finance Facility for it to be launched. [202669]

Mr. Timms: The number of donor countries needed depends on the size of the commitment individual countries are willing to make. Clearly, a critical mass of donors is needed to achieve the gains of scale and predictability.

MRSA

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how often the MRSA virus was listed as a cause of death on a death certificate in the most recent period for which figures are available. [201518]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Derek Wyatt, dated 8 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how often the MRSA virus was listed as a cause of death on a death certificate in the most recent period for which figures are available. (201518)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2002. The number of deaths in England and Wales in that year where the MRSA bacterium was mentioned anywhere on death certificates was 800. The method used for obtaining this figure was published in a report in *Health Statistics Quarterly* in spring 2004.[1]

Internationally accepted guidance from the World Health Organisation on the completion of death certificates requires only those conditions that contribute to death to be recorded.

[1] Griffiths C, Lamagni TL, Crowcroft NS, Duckworth G and Rooney C (2004) Trends in MRSA in England and Wales: analysis of morbidity and mortality data for 1993–2002. *Health Statistics Quarterly* 21, 15–22.

PISA Survey

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) for what reason the Office for National Statistics did not supply sufficient data to the OECD for their 2003 PISA survey; and if he will make a statement; [203174]

(2) which official in his Department was responsible for collating data for the OECD PISA survey 2003. [203176]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Nick Gibb, dated 8 December 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to two of your recent Parliamentary Questions on the 2003 PISA survey. (203174 and 203176)

PISA is a survey co-ordinated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which was conducted in 41 countries in 2003. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) conducted the survey in England and Wales on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in Northern Ireland on behalf of Department of Education, Northern Ireland. The survey in Scotland was conducted by the Scottish Centre for Research in Education on behalf of the Scottish Executive.

The survey involves a two-hour written assessment, as well as completion of a questionnaire by a representative sample of students aged 15. In the UK, PISA depends on the voluntary co-operation of both schools and students. Compared with other surveys conducted through schools, PISA is quite disruptive as it takes a long time to complete and is conducted in the Spring term when schools are preparing for examinations.

Minimum criteria for response rates are set by OECD, and the response rates in the UK, in particular in England, fell short of the required minimum. ONS conducted the survey according to current best practice and, with the DfES, made every effort to persuade schools to participate. In spite of this, the survey response rates fell short of the threshold set by the OECD.

As National Statistician, ultimately I am responsible for all work of the Office for National Statistics.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201347]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged; [201371]

(3) how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203479]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to him today by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Tax Collection

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of collection of *(a)* national insurance, *(b)* income tax, *(c)* capital gains tax and *(d)* inheritance tax has been in each year since 1997. [203213]

Dawn Primarolo: The cost of collection is reported each year in the Inland Revenue's Annual Report. It is calculated by apportioning administrative expenditure between the main taxes and duties.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the tax credits computer system can *(a)* import data from and *(b)* export data to the income tax computer system. [201576]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. It holds information for the purposes specified to the Data Protection Commissioner, and may use this information for any of them.

The Inland Revenue receives and uses information about tax credit claimants and tax payers from others, and may give information to others but only as the law permits to:

check the accuracy of information,

prevent or detect crime,

or protect public funds.

The Inland Revenue may check information they receive about claimants and taxpayers with what is already in their records. This can include information provided by customers as well as others such as other Government Departments and agencies and overseas tax authorities.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress is being made in removing the administration of tax credits for employers; and when he expects to implement this change. [203167]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue is consulting representatives of employers and other interested parties to ensure that the transition from employer payment of working tax credit to direct payment by the Inland Revenue proceeds smoothly for both employers and claimants. Once that consultation is complete, I shall announce the timetable for phasing out the payment of working tax credit by employers.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what total expenditure on the working tax credit was in 2003–04, broken down between *(a)* the working tax credit itself and *(b)* the childcare tax credit; [203240]

(2) what total expenditure on the child tax credit was in 2003–04, broken down between *(a)* the family element, *(b)* the child element and *(c)* other elements; [203242]

(3) how much expenditure on *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit in 2003–04 was (i) offset for the purposes of public expenditure calculations payments of income tax and (ii) counted as public expenditure. [203268]

Dawn Primarolo: Expenditure on the child and working tax credits in the financial year 2003–04 appears in Note 3 to the Trust Statement in the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts for that year.

On (i), expenditure on WTC includes £490 million paid to the main carer of the children for childcare as part of WTC. The total level of childcare support provided through the childeare element in 2003–04 is estimated to be over £700 million. This includes cases where this element increased the amount of child tax credit (CTC) paid.

On (ii), It is not possible to provide a split of total expenditure on CTC between the component elements. The amount of award payable is reduced for families whose incomes are above the threshold, and this reduction is applied to the total value of all elements taken together.

On (iii), reliable separate splits between CTC and WTC of the negative tax and payments of entitlement components of tax credits expenditure are not available.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people living in the City of Edinburgh local authority area have had payment of their tax credits stopped because they failed to provide the Inland Revenue with updated information by the 30 September deadline. [203378]

Dawn Primarolo: This number is not known, and a reliable estimate could not be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average length of time taken to answer calls made to the customer telephone number of the Tax Credit Office customer relations team in Preston is. [203379]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax credit customers phoning with a query or problem about their tax credits should ring the main Tax Credits Helpline on 0845 300 3900 (Great Britain) or 0845 603 2000 (Northern Ireland). These helplines are open seven days a week from 08:00 to 20:00.

The Tax Credit Office's customer relations team deals with formal customer complaints and has a phone number that its customers can ring if they have a query. There are five lines, which are staffed throughout normal office hours and handle around 100 calls a day. The Tax Credit Office does not have information about the average length of time taken to answer calls to the customer relations team's phone number.

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many months' backlog there is for appeals concerning overpayment of *(a)* working family and *(b)* child tax credit; [203146]

(2) how many appeals concerning overpayment of working family tax credits have been successful this year. [203147]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The information requested is not available.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the analysis of the household survey data for 2003–04 to provide an estimate of families eligible for but not claiming child tax credit will be concluded. [200233]

Dawn Primarolo: Subject to ensuring the data and methodology are sufficiently robust, we expect the analysis to be completed towards the end of 2005–06.

Workless Households

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children there were in workless households in each local authority in the Northern Way Initiative area in each year from 1998 to 2004; and what percentage of children these figures represent in each year. [202678]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 8 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about children in workless households. (202678)

Information on each local authority in the Northern Way Initiative area cannot be provided as the geographical borders of this have not been precisely identified.

The attached table gives the estimates of the number and the percentage of children who were living in workless households in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber regions for the three months ending in May each year from 1998 to 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling error.

Children[1] Living in Workless Households[2]—Not seasonally adjusted

Three months ending in May each year[3]	*North East*		*North West*		*Yorkshire and Humber*	
	(000)	*Per cent.*[4]	*(000)*	*Per cent.*[4]	*(000)*	*Per cent.*[4]
1998	132	25.2	335	23.6	200	20.4
1999	134	25.3	314	22.6	182	18.5
2000	117	22.6	271	19.4	182	18.7
2001	107	22.0	264	19.1	156	16.6
2002	94	19.8	277	19.9	194	20.9
2003	120	24.9	283	20.1	157	16.7
2004	103	23.3	245	18.0	146	15.8

[1] Children refers to children under 16.
[2] A workless household is a household with at least one person of working age (male aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59), and in which no one aged 16 or over is in employment.
[3] Figures have not been adjusted to include estimates for households with unknown economic activity.
[4] Children in workless households as percentage of children in all working age households.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

World Debt

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has made to *(a)* the IMF and *(b)* the World Bank concerning (i) debt write-off and (ii) a donor conference for Angola. [203129]

Mr. Timms: Angola's debt situation has been discussed in the Paris Club, where both the IMF and World Bank are represented. Before the UK Government can support debt relief for Angola, the Government of Angola will need to have an appropriate programme with the IMF. The IMF have been working with the Angolan Government on the steps towards such a programme.

Before we and other donors can consider supporting a donor conference, the Government of Angola also needs to have an effective poverty reduction strategy.

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202499]

Mr. Timms: The Department is committed to the fair treatment of all staff and not to discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age. The Department's policy is set out in its equal opportunities statement and is available for inspection on our public website.

Departmental HR policies take full account of the equal opportunities legislation and best practice and the Department conducts regular internal statistical analyses to monitor representation and appraisal by age in order that specific age issues are identified and addressed.

In anticipation of the ED regulation due to come into force in October 2006 the Department is reviewing its policy around retirement age/maximum employment age and related issues to ensure a fully inclusive workforce.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kind of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [202907]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not regularly advertise in Muslim newspapers. However, some of the Department's public appointments have been advertised in *The Nation*.

UK Film Industry

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the contributions of black film to the UK film industry; and what support is given by her Department. [203135]

Estelle Morris: The DCMS administers support to the UK film industry through the agency of the UK Film Council, which has as part of its remit the promotion of film making and viewing to people from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible.

The UK Film Council works extensively to ensure that under-represented groups are supported. Its diversity strategy is committed to helping the industry achieve a more diverse work force in terms of gender, disability and ethnicity both behind and in front of the camera across the film industry value chain.

In terms of UK Film Council awards, its purpose is to facilitate and support any project, organisation or film maker in line with its wide strategic aim of promoting film across the social and cultural spectrum.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202462]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's commitment not to discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age is set out in its equal opportunities policy and other relevant sections of its Staff Handbook.

Building Regulations

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what timate he has made of the cost to small businesses of *(a)* certification and *(b)* the regulatory burden of Part of Building Regulations when it comes into effect on January 2005; [202120]

(2) what estimate he has made of the financial impact r local authorities of Part P of the Building egulations from 1 January 2005. [202125]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the Part P egulatory Impact Assessment which is available in the ibrary of the House and on the Office Deputy Prime linister's website.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what lvertising and publicity will be employed to ensure that omeowners are informed of the effects of the new uilding regulations. [202121]

Phil Hope: A publicity campaign aimed at ouseholders will be launched very shortly. It is planned part of the campaign to have a free leaflet available om local authorities, electrical contractors and major ectrical wholesalers and retailers and to have display lvertising in national newspapers.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what sessment he has made of the impact on small usinesses of the requirement for electricians to have a escribed level of insurance cover; and if he will make statement. [202122]

Phil Hope: Electricians who are members of a Part P mpetent person scheme are required as a condition of gistration with a scheme to have at least £2 million ublic liability insurance. Those who are not members a scheme do not have such a requirement placed on em.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what dditional funding he will provide to local authorities to eet the costs of Part P of the Building Regulations om 1 January 2005. [202126]

Phil Hope: Such funding is not necessary. Local thority building control services are funded from fees id by those using the service.

Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime linister what the costs were of rebilling residents in the unties of Hereford and Worcester following the pping of the fire authority's funding; and whether this st will have an effect on services. [203110]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government has not measured e cost independently. When its residents were rebilled, ereford and Worcester Fire Authority stated that the st of retailing was 450,000.

In designating Hereford and Worcester Fire uthority for capping in 2004–05, the Government took to account representations made by the authority, cluding the costs of retailing. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is confident that the authority can deliver a good service and carry out all its statutory functions within its revised budget requirement. The authority could have avoided the costs of retailing by not setting an excessive budget increase. It increased its budget requirement by 19.4 per cent. and council tax by 29.4 per cent.

Bathside Bay Container Terminal

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what date he expects the outcome of the public inquiry into the Bathside Bay container terminal to be announced. [203080]

Keith Hill: The inquiry into the proposed container terminal at Bathside Bay closed on 21 October. The inspector is currently preparing his report, which is expected to be submitted to the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Transport by the end of March. Decisions on the proposals will be issued as soon as the respective Secretaries of State have had sufficient opportunity to consider the inspector's recommendations.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201708]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister routinely uses ethnic press and media as part of its publicity and information campaigns.

Among the titles used are, Asian Eye, Asian Leader, Asian Image, Asian News, Asian Trader, Asian Times, and the Eastern Times.

Although these titles are not predominantly aimed at the Muslim community they do include a considerable Muslim readership.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also planning a fire safety campaign aimed at the Muslim community for Eid and this will be targeted using the Muslim press.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in his Department in each of the last two years. [202451]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not been engaged in any *(a)* new builds, or *(b)* demolition rebuilds within the last two years.

The estimated capital cost of local authority led Private Finance Initiatives which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is supporting was £207.322 million in 2003 and £122.73 million 2004. The

whole life cost of these Private Finance Initiative projects is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [202461]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises the benefits of recruiting and retaining the highest calibre staff and allowing parents to make their own choices about where and what type of child care they want for their child.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister introduced a Childcare Voucher scheme on 1 November 2004 to replace the limited number of subsidised places it supported at a central London nursery. Eligible members of staff may claim a voucher valued at £23 per week. Since the scheme was introduced 58 members of staff have been placed on the scheme at an annualised cost of £69K.

The Planning Inspectorate provides five subsidised places at a local off-site crèche at a cost of £10.5K per annum. The Fire Service College provides 17 subsidised places at an on-site crèche at a cost of £39K per annum.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also participates in the Westminster Holiday Playscheme, which provides holiday care for children of school age. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister currently supports 31 staff for an average of two weeks in school holidays and subsidises 50 per cent. of the daily cost of £30.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total external spending by his Department was on public-private partnership consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202469]

Phil Hope: The total external spending by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on public private partnership consultants was £117,239.90 in 2003. There were no costs incurred in 2004. Two consultancy firms were used by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister over this period.

The additional information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

Electricians

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Department for Education and Skills to ensure that training courses for electricians are in place in preparation for the commencement of Part P of Building Regulations. [202979]

Phil Hope: None, but officials from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have talked to the Learning and Skills Council, Summit Skills, the Institution of Electrical Engineers, the Electrical Contractors Association, the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting and others about the provision of training for electricians.

Fuse Boxes

Jon Trickett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received about installing re-set fuse boxes in council-owned properties; and if he will make a statement. [202569]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not received any representations on installing re-set fuse boxes in council properties.

Grants

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cash incentive scheme grants were made by each local authority in London in 2003–04; and what the total value of these grants was in each authority. [203136]

Keith Hill: The information reported by London Boroughs on the number of cash incentive scheme grants made in 2003–04 and the total value of their grants is as follows:

£ thousand

	Total number of grants	*Total expenditure*
Barnet	33	854
Brent	32	128
Camden	13	565
Croydon	46	928
Baling	36	1,080
Enfield	37	879
Haringey	28	551
Hillingdon	21	254
Islington	1	24
Kingston upon Thames	8	159
Lewisham	35	649
Merton	6	125
Tower Hamlets	71	1,206
Waltham Forest	9	265
Wandsworth	35	715
Westminster	14	395
London	425	8,777

Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of Statutory Instrument No. 986/2003, deregulatory section 129 of the Housing Act 1988. [203138]

Keith Hill: Regular monitoring information shows that both the number and average size of Cash Incentive Scheme grants in 2003–04 were similar to figures before deregulation, which came into effect from 1 April 2003. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has yet to assess the specific impact of deregulation.

Local Government Pensions

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the proposals for changes to the local government pension scheme *(a)* were in their original form and *(b)* are in their latest revised form. [202711]

Phil Hope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given o him on 14 and 15 September 2004, *Official Report*, olumns 1527W and 1601W respectively, which set out he Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's proposed mendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme. he relevant statutory consultation and summaries f the proposed amendments are available on the ffice of the Deputy Prime Minister's website t: www.xoq83.dial.pipex.com/availabledoc.htm. The tatutory consultation exercise ended on 30 June, the esponses have been considered and an amended SI is xpected to be laid before Parliament shortly.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether any local government pension scheme has been allowed to capitalise pension fund shortfalls. [202712]

Phil Hope: Since 1 April 2000, 40 local authorities in England have been allowed to treat as capital expenditure the making of lump-sum payments into their pension funds most under a time limited scheme that has now expired. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is about to issue guidance on the circumstances in which we shall be willing to allow such treatment in future. The authorities in question were the following:

Adur District Council
Arun District Council
Babergh District Council
London Borough of Brent
Chelmsford Borough Council
Chichester District Council
Crawley Borough Council
East Devon District Council
East Hertfordshire District Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Forest Heath District Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Ipswich Borough Council
London Borough of Islington
Kennet District Council
London Borough of Lambeth
Maldon District Council
Malvern Hills District Council
Mid Bedfordshire District Council
Mole Valley District Council
North Devon District Council
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Runnymede Borough Council
Salisbury District Council
South Derbyshire District Council
South Hams District Council
Spelthorne Borough Council
St. Edmundsbury Borough Council
Surrey Heath Borough Council
Swindon Borough Council
Three Rivers District Council
Torbay Borough Council
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Uttlesford District Council
Waverley Borough Council
Welwyn Hatfield Council
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council
Wiltshire County Council
Wyre Forest District Council.

Oil-fired Heating

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from the *(a)* Environment Agency and *(b)* Oil Firing Technical Association on improving the training of installers of oil-fired heating equipment. [203410]

Phil Hope: There have been no representations to Ministers on improving the training of installers of oil fired heating equipment. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are in discussion with both the Environment Agency and the Oil Firing Technical Association however on improving compliance with the Building Regulations for controlling the risks of oil pollution from domestic oil fuel tanks.

Traveller Caravans

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Traveller caravans were on *(a)* authorised and *(b)* unauthorised sites in the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [203589]

Keith Hill: The information is as follows:

(a) Figures for caravans on authorised sites in the Greater London area are as follows:

	Number
January 2002	649
July 2002	741
January 2003	621
July 2003	701
January 2004	699
July 2004	638

(b) figures for caravans on unauthorised sites in the Greater London area are as follows:

	Number
January *2002*	*163*
July 2002	90
January 2003	100
July 2003	124
January 2004	170
July 2004	209

WALES

Railways Bill

13. **Gareth Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with Cabinet and National Assembly for Wales Government colleagues on the impact of the Railways Bill on transport in Wales. [201789]

Mr. Touhig: I have regular discussions with colleagues about railways in Wales. Taken together with the Transport (Wales) Bill, the powers to be included in the Railways Bill will enable the Assembly to take forward its integrated transport strategy.

Rail Services

14. **Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the First Secretary of the National Assembly for Wales to discuss the provision of rail services in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [201790]

Mr. Touhig: My right hon. Friend and I have regular discussions with Assembly Secretaries on a number of issues, including rail provision. The Railways Bill will devolve additional responsibilities to the Assembly for the Wales and Borders franchise, and the Assembly will be able to appoint a member to the Rail Passengers Council.

Public Service Broadcasting

15. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on the future of public service broadcasting in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [201791]

Mr. Hain: I fully recognise the vital role public service broadcasting plays in Wales. I am supportive of the need to maintain a high standard of programming and productions relevant to Wales.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200629]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office publishes its policy on the payment of invoices issued to it and performance against the related target yearly in its Annual Report.

The most recent Annual Report (Cm 6228) was published in April 2004 and copies were laid in the parliamentary Libraries.

National Assembly for Wales

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the memoranda of understanding under which responsibilities for specific services have been transferred to the National Assembly for Wales; and if he will put a copy of each memorandum in the Library. [199884]

Mr. Touhig: Responsibility for specific services can only be transferred to the Assembly by primary legislation or by Order under the Government of Wales Act 1998 (the Act).

Section 41 of the Act provides that arrangements may be made between the Assembly and any relevant authority for any functions of one of them to be exercised by, or by the staff of, the other. "Relevant authority" is defined as

"any Government Department, any local or public authority or the holder of any public office."

Such agreements do not transfer responsibility; they deal with administrative arrangements as to how it will be exercised.

No central record is kept of such agreements, but I am aware that a number are in force in both directions. The Act does not specify any particular form for these agreements.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201422]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201447]

Mr. Hain: The information is not held in the format requested. All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203475]

Mr. Hain: None.

Post Office

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Secretaries in the National Assembly for Wales Government on financial support for rural post offices in Wales. [201785]

Mr. Hain: I have regular meetings with Cabinet colleagues and the Assembly First Minister to discuss a range of issues, including the post office network in Wales.

Social Exclusion

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with National Assembly for Wales Secretaries and Cabinet colleagues on the impact of transport on social exclusion in Wales. [201786]

Mr. Touhig: I have regular discussions about matters affecting transport in Wales. This year, the Assembly is providing more than £8.5 million to local authorities under the local transport grant scheme, enabling them to boost the number and range of subsidised bus services, and support community transport projects.

Welsh Development Agency

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the First Secretary on the future of the Welsh Development Agency. [201788]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with the First Minister on a wide variety of subjects, including the work of the Welsh Development Agency.

DEFENCE

Army Training Camp (Fremington)

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Army training camp at Fremington, North Devon. [199950]

Mr. Caplin: At present we have no plans to change our use of Fremington camp. Should our intentions change in the future, I will ensure that the hon. Member and all the relevant local authorities are informed.

Crèche Facilites

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [200807]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence provides 36 crèches (benefiting 700 children) providing occasional care and 70 pre schools (benefiting over 2,000 children) providing education on a sessional basis, primarily for Service families.

Empty Properties

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his department, (ii) his agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [200800]

Mr. Caplin: Estimates of the annual cost and total value of empty freehold properties owned by this Department in each of the last two years, and for which the Ministry of Defence has responsibility, are outlined in the following table:

Serial (a)	*As at 31 March each year*	*Estimated annual cost of empty properties (£ million) (b)*	*Estimated value of empty properties (£ million) (c)*
1	2003	2.3	49.9
2	2004	1.9	46.1

These figures are based on empty Service Families Accommodation. The number of empty freehold properties fluctuates on a daily basis, due to the frequent movements of Service personnel.

Gurkhas

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many ex-Gurkha soldiers fall outside the 1997 Hong Kong Agreement with regards to work rights, residency and citizenship in the United Kingdom. [200049]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* We estimate that there are up to 24,000 former British Army Gurkhas who left between the separation of British Gurkhas from the Indian Army in 1947 and 1 July 1997, and do not qualify under the new HM Forces Immigration Rule. However, any applications received from these ex-Gurkhas will be considered by the Home Office on the basis of their individual merits.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria have been used in deciding the status of Gurkha soldiers who have been refused the right to work, reside and apply for UK citizenship. [200050]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The implementation and interpretation of immigration rules is a matter for the Home Secretary. Further policy guidance will be published on the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate website shortly.

King's Own Scottish Borderers

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the regimental recruiting area is of the King's Own Scottish Borderers. [201538]

Mr. Caplin: The traditional recruiting area for the King's Own Scottish Borderers is Dumfries and Galloway, Lanarkshire (part of), The Borders (part of) and Berwick upon Tweed.

These areas are not, however, fixed. Individuals expressing an interest in a regiment or corps that did not recruit in their home area would not be refused entry.

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the operational deployments of the King's Own Scottish Borderers have been since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [201539]

Mr. Ingram: The details of the operational deployments for the King's Own Scottish Borderers since 1997 are not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost. I can, however, provide the details from January 2000. Deployments have been defined as unaccompanied battalion level operational tours.

The battalion has twice deployed to Northern Ireland; from June to November 2000 and September 2001 to March 2002; and to Iraq from July to October 2003. The battalion was also deployed intermittently in late 2002 and early 2003 on Operation Fresco firefighting duties.

Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when recruits to the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers will begin their basic training. [201486]

Mr. Caplin: All potential recruits who pass the selection process are allocated a training place in accordance with the Army Training and Recruiting Agency's Recruit Allocation Plan. The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, a part of the Queen's Division, is allocated

places on training courses at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick every month (except December when no courses are run).

HEALTH

Advertising Approval

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which senior NHS staff approved the advertising feature in NHS Family Choice Magazine promoting Popzone; and what criteria are used to determine from which suppliers advertisements are accepted for inclusion in the magazine. [200432]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not produce NHS Family Choice magazine. It is not responsible for the content of the magazine and does not support or endorse any of the content. A private sector company called Cyworks plc produces the magazine. The Department has repeatedly requested Cyworks to stop using the NHS letters as part of the magazine title. To date all such requests have been ignored.

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [200783]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There is no place for unfair discrimination in the Department or national health service (NHS) on the grounds of age. The Department's commitment to its staff not to discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age is set out in its equal opportunities policy. The national service framework for older people made the clear statement that age discrimination would not be tolerated in access to health and social care, and the NHS plan reinforced the value of diversity and commitment to equality of opportunity within the NHS work force.

Ashford Hospital (Middlesex)

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his Department's negotiations with Capio UK regarding the planned provision of a treatment centre at Ashford hospital (Middlesex). [203141]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* Discussions between the national health service sponsors, the Department and Capio continue and, subject to a satisfactory outcome to those discussions, it is expected that the contract will be closed in time for services to commence in April 2005.

Employers' Liability Claims

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many employers' liability claims in the NHS have been recorded by the NHS Litigation Authority in each year since 1997; and if he will estimate the total potential cost to the NHS; [199925]

(2) if he will list the 10 main causes of claims for employers' liability in the NHS in the last period for which figures are available; and what the costs to the NHS were of each. [199926]

Mr. Hutton: The liabilities to third parties scheme (LTPS) is a risk-pooling scheme for national health service trusts, NHS foundation trusts, primary care trusts and special health authorities which provides indemnity for non-clinical risks such as employers' and public liabilities. The scheme was introduced in 1999 and is operated by the NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA).

Table 1 shows information provided by the NHSLA on the number of employers' liability claims that were notified to them since 1999.

Table 1

	Number of claims	*Total cost of claims (£)*	*Total paid (£)*	*Outstanding estimate (£)*
1999–2000	802	5,761,964	5,010,455	751,509
2000–01	1,827	21,615,240	14,792,176	6,823,064
2001–02	2,433	34,503,774	14,955,180	19,548,594
2002–03	2,448	28,832,524	8,408,161	20,424,363
2003–04	2,747	36,133,867	2,629,670	33,504,197
Total	10,257	126,847,368	45,795,641	81,051,727

Table 2 shows information provided by the NHSLA on the 10 main causes of claims for employers' liability since the scheme commenced to the current date.

Table 2

Cause	*Number of claims*	*Total cost of claims (£)*	*Total paid (£)*	*Outstanding estimate (£)*
Slip or trip	3,046	34,244,569	12,791,323	21,453,246
Other	2,468	34,091,276	11,287,626	22,803,649
Defective tools/ equipment	1,415	16,359,439	5,739,517	10,619,922
Illness/ disease	1,310	16,179,781	5,635,807	10,543,973
Assault	1,267	19,160,939	4,066,799	15,094,141
Manual handling	1,071	14,420,011	3,369,240	11,050,771
Sharps injury	659	3,561,433	1,713,873	1,847,560
Repetitive process	212	3,561,433	1,713,873	1,847,560
Hit by object	74	723,398	39,677	683,721
Road traffic accident	36	164,687	48,015	116,672

General Medical Council

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent discussions he has had on the five year limitation for lodging a complaint with the General Medical Council; [201511]

(2) if he will take steps to ensure that complaints submitted to the General Medical Council outside the five year limitation period are investigated if it might have a bearing on a doctor's fitness to practise; [201512]

(3) what discussions took place between his Department and the General Medical Council prior to the introduction of recent changes in the time limit for lodging complaints. [201513]

Mr. Hutton: The recent changes to the General Medical Council's (GMC) fitness to practise procedures were made by amendment of the Medical Act 1983 under The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Order 2002. These changes came into force on 1 November 2004. The Department discussed the changes with the GMC as part of the preparations for the making of the Order, which was subject to a statutory consultation before it was laid in Parliament for approval.

The time limit during which an allegation must be made to the GCMC was changed by the GMC amendment rules in November 2002 (SI 2002/2572). As is usual practice, these rules were discussed with the GMC while they were being drafted. The General Medical Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules Order of Council 2004, which also came into force on 1 November re-enacted this previous change. The rules already provide in rule 4(5) for an allegation made outside the five-year period to be proceeded with if in the exceptional circumstances of the case the registrar considers it is in the public interest to do so.

Health Professions Council

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what purposes the Health Professions Council is advertising on radio; what the cost of radio advertising used by them is in the past 12 months; and what estimate has been made of the cost of planned radio advertising. [202176]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Health Professions Council (HPC), which is an independent regulator funded by membership subscription. The HPC has a statutory duty under article 3(13) of the HPC order to inform the public about its work.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated to the Health Professions Council *(a)* in the current financial year and *(b)* for each of the next three years. [202177]

Mr. Hutton: We have no funding allocated to the Health Professions Council for this year or for future years. The council is an independent regulator funded by membership subscription.

Health Trainers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the process will be for accrediting NHS health trainers, as defined in the White Paper, "Choosing Health", Cm 6374. [199484]

Mr. Hutton: Health trainers are a new initiative for the national health service and we will be working in consultation with the Health Professions Council and others with an interest to develop processes for accreditation building on the experience gained by piloting the health trainer model in spearhead primary care trusts from 2005. These processes will be based on completion of formal training with built-in standards and quality assurance.

Junior Doctors (Working Time Directive)

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the strategic health authorities which did not achieve full compliance with the European working time directive for junior doctors in each month since August. [201261]

Mr. Hutton: Compliance with the working time directive (WTD) is a local matter and the Department of Health does not routinely collect validated information on WTD compliance.

From informal discussions with strategic health authorities, we know that the vast majority of trusts achieved compliance across all specialties by 1 August. These discussions also revealed that implementation of the WTD has resulted in a handful of trusts experiencing teething problems in a limited number of specialties.

Mental Health

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the net ingredient cost *(a)* in total and *(b)* per head of population was of (i) tranquilisers and (ii) anti-depressants in each strategic health authority in each of the past three years. [202708]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the net ingredient cost of antidepressants and tranquilisers in total and per head of population in each strategic health authority in the last two years is shown in the tables. It is not possible to provide similar information for 2001, as data is held on the prescribing analysis and cost system for only 36 months.

Net ingredient cost (£ million) and net ingredient cost per head of population of antidepressant drugs prescribed in GP practices in England that were dispensed in the community in 2002 and 2003, by strategic health authority

	Net ingredient cost (£ million)		*Net ingredient cost per head of population (£)*	
Strategic health authority	*2002*	*2003*	*2002*	*2003*
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	16.4	17.0	7.52	7.74
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	10.9	11.1	6.76	6.88
Birmingham and The Black Country	15.8	16.7	6.97	7.33
Cheshire and Merseyside	22.3	23.2	9.49	9.84
County Durham and Tees Valley	10.8	11.2	9.46	9.81
Cumbria and Lancashire	17.3	18.0	9.06	9.38
Essex	11.4	11.7	7.03	7.19
Greater Manchester	22.9	24.0	9.09	9.47
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	16.1	16.9	9.01	9.43
Kent and Medway	11.3	11.8	7.13	7.36
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	11.1	11.4	7.07	7.22
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire	11.3	11.7	6.91	7.13
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	20.0	21.0	9.11	9.47
North Central London	7.2	7.5	5.95	6.14
North East London	7.5	7.7	4.90	5.05

Net ingredient cost (£ million) and net ingredient cost per head of population of antidepressant drugs prescribed in GP practices in England that were dispensed in the community in 2002 and 2003, by strategic health authority

Strategic health authority	Net ingredient cost (£ million)		Net ingredient cost per head of population (£)	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
North West London	9.1	9.4	5.03	5.16
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	13.5	14.0	9.71	10.05
Shropshire and Staffordshire	12.0	12.3	9.04	8.19
Somerset and Dorset	8.5	8.8	7.10	7.26
South East London	8.3	8.5	5.47	5.63
South West London	7.0	7.1	5.32	5.46
South West Peninsula	12.4	12.8	7.82	7.98
South Yorkshire	11.3	11.7	8.92	9.19
Surrey and Sussex	20.1	21.0	7.85	8.16
Thames Valley	14.7	15.4	7.00	7.30
Trent	19.2	19.9	7.23	7.45
West Midlands South	10.1	10.6	6.59	6.83
West Yorkshire	16.8	17.0	8.02	8.11
England	375.5	389.3	7.56	7.81

Net ingredient cost (£ million) and net ingredient cost per head of population of tranquilisers prescribed in GP practices in England that were dispensed in the community in 2002 and 2003, by strategic health authority

Strategic health authority	Net ingredient cost (£ million)		Net ingredient cost per head of population (£)	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	1.5	1.5	0.69	0.70
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	0.9	0.9	0.55	0.56
Birmingham and The Black Country	1.7	1.7	0.74	0.74
Cheshire and Merseyside	2.2	2.2	0.92	0.93
County Durham and Tees Valley	1.2	1.1	1.04	0.97
Cumbria and Lancashire	2.1	2.0	1.09	1.06
Essex	1.2	1.3	0.75	0.77
Greater Manchester	2.5	2.6	1.01	1.02
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	1.2	1.2	0.65	0.65
Kent and Medway	1.3	1.3	0.80	0.81
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	1.0	1.0	0.64	0.64
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire	1.2	1.2	0.72	0.70
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	1.8	1.9	0.84	0.84
North Central London	0.6	0.6	0.52	0.52
North East London	0.7	0.7	0.47	0.46
North West London	0.9	0.9	0.50	0.49
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	1.1	1.1	0.77	0.75
Shropshire and Staffordshire	1.1	1.1	0.73	0.73
Somerset and Dorset	1.0	0.9	0.80	0.78
South East London	0.7	0.7	0.47	0.48
South West London	0.6	0.7	0.50	0.50
South West Peninsula	1.4	1.4	0.88	0.90
South Yorkshire	1.0	1.0	0.83	0.81
Surrey and Sussex	2.3	2.4	0.91	0.92
Thames Valley	1.1	1.2	0.54	0.55
Trent	1.8	1.8	0.70	0.69
West Midlands South	1.0	1.1	0.67	0.69
West Yorkshire	1.8	1.7	0.84	0.83
England	37.0	37.2	0.75	0.75

Notes:

1. This information was obtained from the Prescribing Analysis and Cost (PACT) system, which covers prescriptions prescribed by GP practices in England and dispensed in the community. Prescriptions written within a GP practice but dispensed outside the strategic health authority will be included in the SHA in which the GP practice is based. Prescriptions written in England but dispensed outside England are included. Prescriptions written in hospitals/clinics that are dispensed in the community, prescriptions dispensed in hospitals and private prescriptions are not included in PACT data. It is important to note this as some British National Formulary (BNF) sections have a high proportion of prescriptions written in hospitals that are dispensed in the community. For example, BNF chapter 4, "Central Nervous System" has a fair proportion of items written in mental health clinics that are dispensed in the community—these prescriptions are not included in PACT data.
2. Net ingredient cost (NIC) is the basic cost of a drug. It does not take account of discounts, dispensing costs, fees or prescription charges income.
3. The sum of all SHAs does not equal the total England figure, because the total England figure includes unidentified doctors (not possible for the PPA to allocate to a PCT).
4. Tranquilisers have been defined as all drugs in the British National Formulary section 4.1 "Hypnotics and anxiolytics". Antidepressants have been defined as all drugs in the British National Formulary section 4.3 "Antidepressant drugs"
5. 2002 and 2003 mid-year population estimates based on the 2001 Census have been used to calculate net ingredient cost per head of population.

Source:

Crown copyright, Prescription Statistics (SD1E), Department of Health.
Website: http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/prescriptionstatistics/index.htm.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the *(a)* fitness for purpose of current information technology used by mental health services trusts and *(b)* delivery of appropriate modern information systems to those trusts; and if he will make a statement. [201890]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information technology systems used by mental health provider trusts have been evaluated as part of the national programme for information technology (NPfIT).

The NPfIT will procure, develop and implement modern, integrated IT infrastructure and systems for all national health service organisations in England by 2010. There are four key elements: electronic appointment booking, an integrated care records service, electronic prescribing and an underpinning IT infrastructure with sufficient connectivity and broadband capacity to support the critical national applications and local systems.

The NPfIT is an essential element in delivering the NHS Plan, focusing on the key developments that will make a significant difference to improving the patient experience and the delivery of care and services.

MRSA

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of the MRSA virus have been detected at Medway Maritime Hospital since 2001; and how many of these cases were detected on the Trafalgar Ward. [201532]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The only information on the bacterium methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSR) available by named trust is the mandatory surveillance system for MRSA blood stream infections. Data are available by trust but not by individual hospital or ward. Information for Medway National Health Service Trust is shown in the table.

MRSA bacteraemia rates by trust category (specialist trust (Medway NHS Trust/Thames Gateway NHS Trust[1]

Period	MRSA per 1,000 bed-days	Number of MRSA bacteraemias
April 2001 to March 2002[1]	0.08	31
April 2002 to March 2003	0.13	29
April 2003 to March 2004	0.22	48

[1] Medway Maritime hospital is part of Medway NHS Trust, but data for 2001–02 was reported for Medway NHS Trust/Thames Gateway NHS Trust.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times the cause of death at the Medway Maritime Hospital has been recorded as being due to the MRSA virus since 2001. [201533]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Derek Wyatt, dated 7 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many times the cause of death at the Medway Maritime Hospital has been recorded as being due to the MRSA bacterium. I am replying in his absence. (201533)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2002. The figure for Medway Maritime Hospital was provided in a written answer published in Hansard on 22 July 2004, column 471W.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the last review of NHS laundry guideline HSG (95) 18 took place; and for how long the temperatures recommended by the guideline have remained unchanged; [200333]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of NHS laundry guideline HSG (95) 18 in *(a)* achieving complete disinfection of laundry and *(b)* reducing the incidence of MRSA; [200334]

(3) what plans he has to update NHS laundry guideline HSG (95) 18 in relation to tackling MRSA; and if he will make a statement. [200335]

Mr. Hutton: Health Service Guidance (95) 18 provides advice and guidance to national health service organisations on the use of laundry practices to reduce possible risks of infection.

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is heat labile and is effectively destroyed at the temperatures advised in HSG (95) 18. There are no plans to update laundry guidance HSG (95) 18 in relation to tackling MRSA. No review of the guidance has been undertaken since it was published in 1995 and the temperature guidelines have remained unchanged since publication of the guidance. The guidance still adequately covers the issue of temperature, disinfection and MRSA.

NHS Walk-in Centres

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what grounds trust hospitals are disallowed from bidding for NHS walk-in centres. [201527]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* No organisation or body has been disallowed from submitting an expression of interest for national health service walk-in centres in response to the advertisements on 4 November 2004 and 6 November 2004.

Nurses

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses were employed in the NHS on a *(a)* permanent and *(b)* temporary basis (i) in total and (ii) broken down by (A) strategic health authority and (B) trust in each year since 1997. [201654]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Information on the number of nurses employed in the national health service by strategic health authority and by NHS organisation in each year since 1997 has been placed in the Library. A breakdown showing those employed on permanent and temporary contracts is not available.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 57–8W, ref 199923, what the whole-time equivalent figure for the period September 2003 to March 2004 was; and what estimates his Department has made of further headcount and whole-time equivalent increases between March 2004 and 2008. [202166]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* As at March 2004, there are an estimated 314,000 whole-time equivalent qualified nurses, including practice nurses, employed in the national health service in England, including an estimated increase of 9,000 since September 2003.

"Delivering the NHS Plan" included an expectation that by 2008, there would be 35,000 more headcount nurses and midwives employed in the NHS than there were in 2001. This expectation has already been met.

We have no further specific targets for increases in the NHS nursing workforce, though we expect that there will be further significant increases.

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what stage the review of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health has reached; and if he will make a statement. [201719]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* No review of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) is being carried out. A consultation exercise to inform the future support arrangements for patients' forums, once the CPPIH has been abolished, is currently underway. The closing date for the consultation exercise is 30 January 2005.

AIDS

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much Government money has been spent on research into the prevention and cure of AIDS. [199555]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

School Nurses

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals he has to expand the school nurse service. [203187]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is available in the White Paper "Choosing Health—Making healthy choices easier" published in November—chapter 3 paragraph 30.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurses have been employed by the NHS in England in each year since 1991; and how many school nurses he expects the NHS will employ in each year until 2011. [199462]

Mr. Hutton: Information is not available on the number of school nurses employed in the national health service since 1991. Reliable information will be available from the September 2004 work force census and we intend to publish the data in February 2005.

By 2010, every primary care trust will be resourced to have at least one full-time, qualified school nurse working with each cluster or group of primary schools and the related secondary school, taking account of health needs and school populations.

Timber

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the refurbishment projects that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months in (i) his Department and (ii) the NHS; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on-site during refurbishment also comes from legal and sustainable sources. [201262]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Within the Department's administrative estate, there are three main refurbishment projects that have commenced or will commence in the next six months. It is the Department's policy that any timber used in such projects should be procured from legal and sustainable sources to meet the requirement of the United Kingdom Government's timber procurement policy.

There is no central list of such projects within the national health service. However, the NHS Environment Assessment Tool issued to the NHS requires this policy to be upheld.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98; [200389]

(2) what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff but which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200409]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is no longer held by the Department and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

IT Contracts

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Advocate-General what the *(a)* projected cost at the time of tender and *(b)* actual cost at the time of completion was for each IT contract commissioned by her office in the last five years. [201618]

The Advocate-General: There have been no IT contracts commissioned by the offices of the Advocate-General within the last five years. The offices' IT systems and support are provided through the Scottish Executive. There are no outsourced IT contracts.

SCOTLAND

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201346]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged. [201372]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Timber

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the refurbishment projects in his Department's premises that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment also comes from legal and sustainable sources. [201142]

Mrs. McGuire: There is currently an essential maintenance programme under way. The Scotland Office has no refurbishment projects in progress or scheduled to take place within the next six months.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Court Transcripts

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make court transcripts available for cases involving hon. Members' constituents to hon. Members free of charge. [203106]

Mr. Leslie: There are currently no plans to make a transcription service available to members of the public free of charge, as the cost to the Department would be prohibitive. Currently transcripts are available for purchase to all parties involved in a case. Those who are not involved can also purchase a transcript if the judge deems the request for wanting one reasonable.

However, the Government do understand that, in some circumstances, victims of crime or their families have a strong desire to review trial proceedings. As a result, my Department is therefore currently funding research into the level of demand for the provision of transcripts to victims. The results of this research will better inform us on development of policy into the issue of provision of transcripts to victims and the benefits this can bring.

This area may also be assisted by longer-term advancements in recording technology. Currently the Department is working up proposals to test digital audio recording in court, which if successful would use voice recognition to enable spontaneous transcripts to be produced at a fraction of the existing cost.

Criminal Defence Service

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to ensure that the Criminal Defence Service is re-credited when a publicly-funded defendant is acquitted; and what estimate he has made of the amount involved based on the last year for which figures are available. [201916]

Mr. Lammy: There is no mechanism for re-crediting the Criminal Defence Service when a publicly-funded defendant is acquitted and there are no plans to change this. There are no figures available to make an estimate of the amount involved.

Experts' Fees

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what plans he has to *(a)* impose a ceiling on fees paid to experts and *(b)* accredited experts; [201913]

(2) what controls the Legal Services Commission operate in relation to *(a)* fees paid to experts and *(b)* approval of experts; and what it spent on disbursements for experts in (i) civil, (ii) family and (iii) criminal cases in 2003–04. [201912]

Mr. Lammy: The Government believe that expert witnesses should be suitably qualified in the subject upon which they assist the court with expert opinion, have achieved a suitable level of specialist knowledge and up to date experience to act as an expert and be recognised by their peers. The recent report "Sudden death in infancy" recommended systems of accreditation and training for experts. Active consideration is being given to this recommendation by all agencies.

As for legally aided cases, the Legal Services Commission published a consultation paper: "The Use of Experts(Quality, Price and Procedures in publicly funded cases" on 26 November 2004.

In relation to fees paid to experts, the paper proposes that rates need to be controlled in the same way as the rates paid to lawyers, and the paper sets out proposed guidance on fee levels in criminal and civil legally aided cases. The guidelines for civil cases are similar to those for legally aided criminal cases, but have a higher maximum and lower minimum.

In relation to the accreditation of experts, the paper proposes that solicitors should be encouraged to use experts and interpreters who are on accredited registers such as: the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners; the National Register of Public Service Interpreters; or the register of the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People. The long-term aim is that all experts instructed in legally aided cases will be accredited.

The LSC is not able to provide the information on disbursement spend in the requested format. In 2003–04, however, the LSC paid over £200 million for

disbursements overall; around £140 million on civil cases and £60 million on criminal. They estimate that experts' fees account for approximately two thirds, (or £130 million) of disbursements.

Freedom of Information Act

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 25 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 7WS, on section 45 code of practice of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, whether the Department has received any representations on this announcement; and whether the Department conducted a public consultation prior to making the announcement. [202808]

Mr. Leslie: Further to his written ministerial statement issued on 25 November 2004, I can confirm that my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs has received one representation regarding the revised Section 45 Code of Practice of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In accordance with Section 45(4) of the Freedom of Information Act, the Secretary of State consulted the Information Commissioner on the content of the revised Section 45 Code of Practice. The Department also consulted fully with other Government Departments on the revised Section 45 Code of Practice. There was no public consultation exercise.

Information Commissioner

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what budget has been allocated to the Office of the Information Commissioner in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Commissioner in each year. [201900]

Mr. Leslie: For 2002–03 the Department allocated a total grant in aid of £8.2 million to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and in 2003–04, this allocation increased to £10.6 million. The ICO has recouped from notification fees £7.7 million in 2002–03 and £8.8 million in 2003–04. This money is returned to Government and effectively offsets the grant in aid. This means that the net expenditure by DCA on the ICO has been £0.5k for 2002–03 and £1.8 million for 2003–04. The number of staff employed by the Information Commissioner has increased from 198 in 2002–03 to 208 by the end of the financial year 2003–04. The Department's grant in aid allocation to the ICO over the course of the last two financial years (2002–03 to 2003–04) has increased by £1.2 million, primarily because ICO have taken on more staff to deal with the case work likely to be generated when the Freedom of Information Act comes into force.

Legal Services Commission

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what amount remains outstanding to the Legal Services Commission under the statutory charge at the latest date for which figures are available; and what steps it is taking to recover this. [201914]

Mr. Lammy: At the end of the financial year 2003–04 the value of debt due to the Legal Services Commission (LSC) under the statutory charge was £264 million. This included £50 million of interest that had accrued upon the debt.

The debt is secured by the registration of a statutory charge against property and is not generally collectable immediately. Under existing regulations, the LSC has no discretion to enforce repayment of the debt until the charged property is re-mortgaged, sold or upon the death of the client. When one of these events occurs, the Land Registry notifies the LSC and recovery procedures commence.

In order to keep funded clients informed about their debt, and to facilitate early repayment, the LSC has commenced sending out annual statements to clients setting out amounts owed, including accrued interest and offering clients the opportunity to make payment in full or by instalment of their debt.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs by what methods charters establishing non-departmental public bodies may be revoked. [202786]

Mr. Leslie: Charters may be revoked by Act of Parliament or by Order in council and may also be surrendered.

Office of Public Guardianship

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what budget has been allocated to the Legal Services Commission in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Commission in each year. [201899]

Mr. Lammy: The budget allocated to the Legal Services Commission for the current financial year (in resource and cash terms) is as follows:

Resource: £1,935 million

Cash: £2,166 million

The number of staff employed (in terms of full-time equivalents) by the Legal Services Commission, for the last two years, are as follows:

2003–04: 1,663

2002–03: 1,619

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202255]

Mr. Leslie: Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, special advisers in the Department for Constitutional Affairs travelled in an official capacity on the following domestic and international visits:

	Visited	*Total (£)*
11 June 2003	Manchester	959.60
24 October 2003	Norwich	546.50
31 October 2003	Derby	1,035.00
21 November 2003	Lowestoft	342.50
28 November 2003	Cardiff	265.90
19 December 2003	New York/Washington DC	21,278.60
29 January 2004	Birmingham	774.60
12 March 2004	Harrow	106.00

All travel by special advisers was undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code, and the Civil Service Management Code.

Televising Trials

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make it his policy to allow the televising of trials. [203038]

Mr. Leslie: On 15 November we issued a consultation paper on the complex and sensitive question of broadcasting court proceedings. When this consultation is complete, we will be in a position to consider whether allowing trials, or parts of trials, to be televised would be beneficial or detrimental to justice.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200329]

Mr. Lammy: My Department is unable to provide a full reply to this question without incurring disproportionate cost. My Department uses the services of external training providers on occasions when there is a training need that cannot be met by the in-house training function, or when there is a specialist training need for which it would not be cost-effective to develop in-house training.

We are able to provide a single, overall, expenditure figure for each financial year since 1998–99 (my Department's accounting systems changed during 1997–98) for external training organised for my Department (and LCD) staff in the following table. These figures include courses organised by all parts of the Department.

Total expenditure figures for external training[1]

Financial year	*Total amount (£)*
1998–99	919,389
1999–2000	700,288
2000–01	1,661,185
2001–02	1,595,018
2002–03	2,043,701
2003–04	2,916,160

[1] Taken from the DCA's Operating Cost Statements, showing amounts accounted for, for all external training where VAT has been charged.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200401]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has paid no fixed penalties to training providers in the period stated.

My Department is committed to providing access to relevant training for all of its staff; that commitment extends to looking for options other than cancellation of training courses should staff be unable to attend.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements over the past six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register to disclose such information. [202789]

The Prime Minister: I meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on-the-record briefing by my Official Spokesman regularly provides details of my public engagements.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Office since its implementation; [201274]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Office between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201368]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) today.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 his special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202264]

The Prime Minister: Information on the travel and accommodation for special advisers who accompanied me on overseas visits are included in the list of Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers 2003–04, copies of which are available in Libraries of the House.

Further information is not available in the format requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Civil Service Management Code.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what budget has been allocated to the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate in each of the past two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Inspectorate in each year. [201861]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Benefit Fraud Inspectorate budget allocation (£)	7,108,885	7,710,776
Staff employed by Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Number)	134	154

Notes:

1. The budget figures for 2002–03 includes £507,675 and 2003–04 includes £494,832 from the H M Treasury Invest to Save Bid.
2. The number of staff in each year is an average across the year.

Benefits

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to publish "Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up in 2002–03". [203173]

Mr. Pond: We expect to release "Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up in 2002–03" in January 2005. The statistics were originally intended for release in December 2004 but have been put back due to delays in the provision of data. A precise date of release will be pre-announced at least two weeks prior to publication in National Statistics Updates—the diary of statistical releases.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when action will be taken concerning the application for child support made by Julie Stephens of Christchurch on 20 June 2003. [202110]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Christopher Chope, dated 8 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when action will be taken concerning the application for child support made by Julie Stephens of Christchurch on 20 June 2003.

As individual cases are confidential, I will write to you separately about this case. This is in line with paragraph 12, part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will ensure that the money paid to him in error by the Child Support Agency is passed without further delay to Ms Oakes, the constituent of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead. [201720]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to my right hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Frank Field, dated 8 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will ensure that the money paid to him in error by the Child Support Agency is passed without further delay to Ms Oakes the constituent of the honourable Member for Birkenhead.

As individual cases are confidential, I will write to you separately about this case. This is in line with paragraph 12, part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency applications are being dealt with off-computer. [202293]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Bob Spink, dated 8 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many CSA applications are currently being dealt with off computer?

Of the Agency's caseload of 1.3 million, around 7,000 cases are currently being dealt with clerically.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects all Child Support Agency cases to have migrated to the new payment scheme. [203015]

Mr. Pond: We will make a decision on the transfer of old scheme cases once we are sure that the new arrangements are working well.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to improve the performance of the Child Support Agency in the handling of direct approaches in correspondence and by telephone from the constituents of honourable Members. [202019]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. John Taylor, dated 8 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will take steps to improve the performance of the Child Support Agency in the handling of direct approaches in correspondence and by telephone from the constituents of honourable Members.

The Child Support Agency is continuing to improve its performance in handling approaches from the constituents of honourable members. We are deploying our staff equitably across the new and old child support schemes to provide the best possible level of service to our clients. Telephone calls are routed direct to a client's caseworker wherever this is possible and our National Helpline continues to provide a back-up service. In addition we offer an e-mail service which is growing in demand and which generally provides a response to a client within 24 hours.

Construction Industry

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of *(a)* the frequency of health and safety inspection in the construction industry, *(b)* the sanctions available for enforcement of breaches reported and *(c)* the criteria used to choose which sanctions are used in a particular case; and if he will make a statement. [201988]

Jane Kennedy: The Health and Safety Executive's Field Operations Directorate (FOD) have made the following number of inspection contacts in the construction industry in the last three years (based on companies identified with a construction Standard Industrial Classification code):

	Number
2001-02	18,089
2002-03	19,881
2003-04	18,694

FOD's Construction Division works with the construction industry and seeks improvements in health and safety standards using a range of methods in addition to inspection and investigation activity and appropriate enforcement action.

The health and safety enforcing authorities have a range of tools at their disposal in seeking to secure compliance with the law and to ensure a proportionate response to criminal offences. These include the provision by an inspector of information and advice. Inspectors may also serve improvement and prohibition notices that require remedial measures to be carried out, or to stop dangerous activities. They may also prosecute (or report to the Procurator Fiscal with a view to prosecution in Scotland).

The health and safety enforcing authorities follow the principles and approach set out in the Health and Safety Commission's Enforcement Policy Statement. This policy statement requires proportionality and consistency in enforcement, in line with the Enforcement Concordat, to make most effective use of enforcing authority resources.

Council Tax Benefit

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensioners in England were in receipt of council tax benefit in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the most recent year for which figures are available. [202287]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Council tax benefit (CTB) beneficiaries aged 60 and over in England

	May 1997	*May 2003*
CTB beneficiaries aged 60+	2,714,000	2,337,000
CTB beneficiaries aged 60+ as percentage of relevant population	27.0	22.5

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are based on a 1 per cent. sample and subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place and caseloads to the nearest thousand.
3. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
4. "Beneficiaries" are all claimants and partners aged 60 or over.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. samples, taken in May 1997 and 2003, and Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates 1997 and 2003.

Disability Income Guarantee

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Strathkelvin and Bearsden receive the disability income guarantee. [202541]

Maria Eagle: The disability income guarantee is paid by means of enhanced disability premiums through income support, jobseeker's allowance (income based), housing benefit and council tax benefit.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit information is not available below Government Office Region level.

As at May 2004, there were 300 income support and jobseeker's allowance (income based) claimants with an enhanced disability premium in Strathkelvin and Bearsden parliamentary constituency.

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Numbers are based on very few sample cases and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation. These figures should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples.

New Deal

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* Scottish people aged 16 to 24, *(b)* Scottish people aged 25 or over and *(c)* Scottish people have entered a period of employment through the New Deal for longer than 13 weeks in each of the last four years; and what each figure is as a percentage of all individuals leaving the New Deal. [202059]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* A measure of sustainability is not available for New Deal for Lone Parents and New Deal 50 plus. For these New Deals, information has been provided for numbers entering employment.

The available information is in the tables.

New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus in Scotland up the June 2004

Period (July to June)	New Deal for Young People: Total number of leavers	New Deal for Young People: Of which, to unsubsidised sustained employment: Number	New Deal for Young People: Of which, to unsubsidised sustained employment: As percentage of all leavers	New Deal 25 plus: Total number of leavers	New Deal 25 plus: Of which, to unsubsidised sustained employment: Number	New Deal 25 plus: Of which, to unsubsidised sustained employment: As percentage of all leavers
2000–01	21,750	8,290	38.1	13,200	1,750	13.2
2001–02	19,840	7,530	38.0	13,190	3,000	22.7
2002–03	20,380	7,440	36.5	13,620	3,150	23.1
2003–04	21,390	8,360	39.1	12,790	3,340	26.1

1. For the purposes of New Deal for Young People (18 to 24) and New Deal 25 plus, a job is regarded as sustained if no new claim is made for jobseeker's allowance within 13 weeks of leaving New Deal.
2. Information is for total leavers and total jobs and may include people who have left New Deal more than once and gained more than one job through New Deal.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
4. Percentages are calculated on unrounded figures.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

New Deal for Lone Parents in Scotland up to June 2004

Period (July to June)	Total number of leavers	Of which, to employment: Number	Of which, to employment: As percentage of all leavers
2000–01	95,840	50,060	52.2
2001–02	101,200	55,830	55.2
2002–03	111,480	60,190	54.0
2003–04	139,450	70,120	50.3

Notes:
1. Information is for total leavers and total jobs and may include people who have left the programme more than once and gained more than one job through the programme.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
3. Percentages are calculated from unrounded figures.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

New Deal 50 plus in Scotland to June 2004

Period	Jobs
July 2000 to June 2001	4,280
July 2001 to June 2002	4,070
July 2002 to March 2003	2,850
April 2003 to June 2003	1,090
July 2003 to June 2004	3,290

Notes:
1. Information to March 2003 refers to number of individuals who have started work through the New Deal 50 plus Employment Credit.
2. Information from April 2003 refers to total Jobcentre Plus recorded job entries through New Deal 50 plus and could include people who have left the programme more than once and started more than one job through the programme.

Sources:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate
Jobcentre Plus Management Information Portal

New Deal for Disabled People in Scotland to March 2004

Period	Jobs	Of which, sustained: Number	Of which, sustained: As percentage of all jobs
July 2001 to June 2002	220	160	70.0
July 2002 to June 2003	1,430	840	58.8
July 2003 to March 2004	1,480	880	59.3

Notes:
1. Data is from July 2001 when New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) was launched nationally.
2. Data is to March 2004 as 13 weeks has to be allowed for jobs to become sustained.
3. For the purposes of New Deal for Disabled People, a job is regarded as sustained when a person, placed into work through a Job Broker, remains in work for 13 out of 39 weeks. Prior to October 2003, an NDDP job was regarded as sustained when a person, placed into work through a Job Broker, remained in work for 26 out of 39 weeks.
4. Information related to jobs gained through NDDP Job Brokers.
5. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
6. Percentages are calculated from unrounded figures.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Nuclear Industry Inspectorate

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Chief Inspector of the Health and Safety Executive with regard to the Nuclear Industry Inspectorate's ability to provide nuclear safety assurances during the dispute with Prospect. [203037]

Jane Kennedy: In my previous answer of 18 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 477W, I said I had asked the Chief Inspector to keep me informed if he believed that NII's ability to provide the nuclear safety assurance we all require was being put at risk. He does not believe this to be the case at present, but continues to keep the position under review.

Pension Credit

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the reasons were for changing the publication schedule of pension credit uptake levels from monthly to quarterly; and if he will make a statement. [199506]

Malcolm Wicks: Pension credit reporting arrangements were originally designed for a new policy bedding in during its first year. Information on numbers of pension credit recipients will now be reported on a quarterly basis, in line with reporting practices for other Departmental benefits.

Pensioners

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he is taking to improve the take-up of benefits available to older people to prevent winter deaths caused by fuel poverty. [199767]

Malcolm Wicks: Winter fuel payments are one of several measures in place to help alleviate fuel poverty. The majority of payments are made automatically without the need to claim. People who have not previously received a payment and who do not receive a Social Security benefit other than child benefit, housing benefit or council tax benefit must claim. Every effort is made to try and contact those who are newly eligible. For those people who do need to make a claim an extensive publicity campaign is carried out. This begins three months before the qualifying week in September and continues to the end of March. The campaign includes advertisements in national and local press, a leaflet and poster made available in a variety of venues, a dedicated winter fuel payment helpline and information on the internet.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library the report setting out the basis of his estimates of the range of pension savings required to avoid dependence on means-tested benefits throughout retirement. [200154]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to produce meaningful estimates. The required savings levels are entirely dependent on the assumptions made about the particular circumstances of the individual concerned, and will vary substantially with those assumptions. It would therefore be misleading to publish estimates which could only reflect a limited range of examples.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners living in the London borough of Wandsworth have an annual income of less than £6,000 per year; and if he will make a statement. [200310]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available.

Pensions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the take-up rate of the basic state pension is. [201287]

Malcolm Wicks: People will become entitled to a state pension if they meet the qualifying conditions. However, there is no statutory requirement for them to claim their state pension at state pension age. Some people may choose to defer claiming their state pension.

The latest available figures for Great Britain show that the total number of people of state pension age or over is 10,743,338 of whom 10,420,000 are in receipt of a state pension.

Note:

The number in receipt of a basic state pension is taken from a 5 per cent. sample and is therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation. The figure is rounded to the nearest hundred.

Sources:

1. Population information—Office for National Statistics and General Register Office Scotland (population estimates as at mid-2003).

2. Numbers in receipt of a basic state pension IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample as at 31 March 2004.

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of women in *(a)* the Scottish Borders, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Great Britain are entitled to the full basic state pension in their own right. [202536]

Malcolm Wicks: The percentage of the female population in *(a)* the Scottish Borders *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Great Britain who get a full Category A basic State Pension in their own right is in the following table:

	Percentage
Scottish Borders	14.6
Scotland	13.8
Great Britain	12.5

Notes:

1. Recipient figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation.

2. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.

3. The relevant female population refers to females aged 60 and over living in the specified areas.

4. A full basic State Pension was £77.45 in 2003–04. The percentages in the answer relate solely to those women who qualified for that amount based on their own national insurance record.

Sources:

Number of recipients—IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample as at 31 March 2004.

Population data is from the Office for National Statistics and General Register Office, Scotland—mid-2003.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what expenditure on contracted-out rebates went on *(a)* approved personal pensions, *(b)* stakeholder pensions, *(c)* contracted-out money purchase schemes and *(d)* defined benefit pensions in each year since 1997. [203168]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the following table:

£ billion

	Estimated cost of rebates				
Tax year	*(a) APPS*	*(b) SHPS*	*(c) COMPS*	*(d) DBS*	*Total*
1997–98	2.2		0.5	4.7	7.4
1998–99	2.2		0.6	5.0	7.8
1999–2000	2.4		0.5	5.2	8.2
2000–01	2.7		0.6	5.4	8.7
2001–02	2.8		0.5	5.6	9.0
2002–03	3.5		0.6	6.3	10.5
2003–04	3.2		0.6	6.4	10.2
2004–05	3.4		0.6	6.7	10.7

Notes:

1. Figures do not sum due to rounding (to nearest £100 million) and are consistent with the rebate estimates for the 2004 Pre-Budget Report.

2. Figures are for Great Britain only and are calculated on an accruals' basis where actual data exists and on GAD estimates where it does not (from 2002–03 onwards).

3. Information on rebate expenditure for stakeholder pensions is not separately available and has been included (from 2002–03) with the APR expenditure.

4. The large increase in expenditure for 2002–03 is due to the increase in the level of the rebate which applied from the beginning of that tax-year.

Source:

Government Actuary's Department (GAD)

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many stakeholder pensions are *(a)* contracted into and *(b)* contracted out of the state second pension. [203177]

Malcolm Wicks: Figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) show that 2,195,521 stakeholder pensions have been sold up to the end of September 2004. Information on numbers contracted out through stakeholder pensions for the tax years 2001–02 and 2002–03 will be available later this month.

Retirement

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the financial effects arising from the proposed change in the retirement age in the first five years after the change. [202235]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are considering what to do about employer's retirement ages in response to the Age Matters consultation and other consultations. The assessment of proposals and options on which the Government consulted are in the Age Matters consultation. Costs and benefits are contained in the Regulatory Impact Assessment. Both are available in the Library.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received winter fuel payments in Bolton, North East. [203361]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in Bolton, North East who received a winter fuel payment in winter 2003–04 was 17,575. We would expect the number for winter 2004–05 to be similar.

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.

2. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. samples.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have requested application forms for winter fuel payments via e-mail since the facility became available. [203374]

Malcolm Wicks: Up to 5 December 2004 there have been 846 requests for winter fuel payment application forms via e-mail.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of the winter fuel payment advertising and publicity campaign has been in each year since its introduction. [200157]

Malcolm Wicks: We carry out a publicity campaign each year to inform people about winter fuel payments. This usually comprises advertising, production and distribution of an information leaflet together with accompanying posters and mailings to advisers and other third parties, in line with the objectives of each year's campaign.

The table sets out total publicity costs for each winter fuel payments campaign since 2001, the year in which the Department for Work and Pensions was created.

Due to differences in the way winter fuel payments publicity was developed and funded before the Department was set up it is not possible to obtain like-for-like figures prior to 2001 without incurring disproportionate costs.

	Expenditure (£)
2001–02	718,000
2002–03	793,000
2003–04	938,000
2004–05	[1]815,000

[1] Estimated.

These figures are exclusive of VAT.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the assumptions were behind the fall in the projected cost of winter fuel payments in 2006–07 and 2007–08 compared with previous years. [203391]

Malcolm Wicks: The commitments to increase winter fuel payments from £150 to £200 a year and to pay an additional £100 to households with someone aged 80 or over were both made for the lifetime of this Parliament. The projected costs of winter fuel payments in 2006–07 and 2007–08 reflect this.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* people and *(b)* households in the (i) North Southwark and Bermondsey and (ii) Dulwich and West Norwood constituencies were (A) eligible to receive and (B) received the winter fuel payment in 2003–04. [203395]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the number of people in the North Southwark and Bermondsey and Dulwich and West Norwood constituencies who were eligible to receive a winter fuel payment. DWP administrative data does not contain complete information on household circumstances and payments are based on household composition.

The information on payments made is in the table.

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of people who received a winter fuel payment in 2003–04*	*Number of households that received a winter fuel payment in 2003–04*
North Southwark and Bermondsey	12,180	9,890
Dulwich and West Norwood	13,060	10,030

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

2. Any residence found to have four or more occupants is not included in these figures as it is assumed to be a residential care or nursing home.

3. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

CABINET OFFICE

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what her target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in her Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202319]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office target time for replying to letters from hon. Members is 15 working days. The same target time applies to officials replying to letters received directly from members of the public.

Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament/Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total cost to the Office was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202326]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Tayside (Pete Wishart) on 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 855W.

EU Directives

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to the Office that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [202324]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office has not implemented any EU directives or regulations in the last two years.

Regulatory Reform Orders

Mr. O'Hara: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many Regulatory Reform Orders have been approved by the House in each year since 2001; and what target has been set by the Government for the number of Regulatory Reform Orders to be approved by 2005. [200683]

Ruth Kelly: Since 2001, a total of 20 Regulatory Reform Orders have been made, and a further eight proposals have been laid for parliamentary scrutiny. The number of Regulatory Reform Orders made each year since 2001 is as follows:

	Number
2001	1
2002	7
2003	8
2004	4

In 2002 the Cabinet Office set a Public Service Agreement target to deliver 60 Regulatory Reform Orders by the end of financial year 2005–06.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) whether she has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in her Department since its implementation; [201342]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in her Office between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201369]

Ruth Kelly: Paragraph 22 of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers states that any civil servant who believes that the action of a special adviser goes beyond that adviser's authority or breaches the Civil Service Code should raise the matter immediately with the Secretary of the Cabinet or the First Civil Commissioner, directly or through a senior civil servant.

Information relating to complaints made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners is set out in the Civil Service Commissioners' annual report. Copies of reports for the period 1996–97 to 2003–04 are available in the Library and can also be obtained on-line at www.civilservicecommissioners.gov.uk.

Sustainable Timber

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans her Department has to fund the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [201073]

Ruth Kelly: Cabinet Office has offered to assist with funding for the creation of a Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET). It is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) responsibility to establish whether offers and/or fees and charges would be appropriate for the establishment and maintenance of CPET.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Angola

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid programmes, have been supported in Angola during each of the last five years; at what value; and what programmes his Department is planning for the next three years. [203288]

Hilary Benn: The following areas of work have been supported by DFID during each of the last five financial years:

	£
Peace building	
1999–2000	0
2000–01	72,000
2001–02	25,735
2002–03	165,827
2003–04	607,814
2004–05	456,808
Humanitarian assistance	
1999–2000	4,005,971
2000–01	2,104,295
2001–02	2,191,312
2002–03	6,835,881

	£
2003–04	3,783,907
2004–05	2,163,084
Economic reform and poverty reduction (including HIV/AIDS)	
1999–2000	0
2000–01	0
2001–02	48,275
2002–03	221,891
2003–04	239,011
2004–05	864,293
Other sectors: e.g. education, urban poverty	
1999–2000	1,122,885
2000–01	1,638,116
2001–02	1,245,182
2002–03	2,412,262
2003–04	2,990,604
2004–05:	1,915,897

In addition to the figures in the table DFID is also supporting a democratisation programme to the value of £200,000 in the year 2004–05.

DFID's current activities in the above areas of focus (peace-building, humanitarian reform, economic reform and poverty reduction) will continue until the end of 2006. DFID will remain actively involved in supporting Angola's post-conflict transition and is also looking at how we can strengthen our collaboration with the World Bank (WB) and European Commission (EC). We are also looking at what more we can do to include Angola in DFID's support to the wider South African Development Community (SADC).

DFID is also funding programmes in Angola multilaterally, through the EC and the UN. In 2002 (the latest available figures) the UK's attributed share of multilateral expenditure in Angola was as follows:

	£ million
EC	5
UN	1.5

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [200863]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The cost of in-house canteen services provided in the UK in each of the last two years were as follows:

	£
2002–03	111,859
2003–04	181,237

The increase, year-on-year, is in part attributable to costs incurred with re-tendering and setting up of the new canteen contract in our East Kilbride office.

There are no other catering services provided by DFID. Costs incurred in our overseas offices are not available centrally and could not be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Burma

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government are taking to assist humanitarian agencies in overcoming obstruction of the delivery of assistance to displaced persons on the border between Thailand and Burma. [202858]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Most internally displaced people live in sensitive or conflict-affected areas to which international agencies have limited access. Securing increased access to such areas for development agencies is an important objective of DFID. We are currently working with International organisations such as the UN to encourage the Burmese authorities to do this. DFID is providing £500,000 to support the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross which has been able to gradually increase its access within Burma over the last three years and is now operating in significant areas of Shan and Karen states and Tenassarim division.

The UK Government are doing everything they can to press the Burmese authorities to begin a genuine process of reform involving all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma. Political progress is essential to underpin an end to the conflict that is both a major cause of displacement of people in Burma and a fundamental obstacle to meeting the needs of many poor people in Burma, including internally displaced people.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate the Government have made of the number of people that remain displaced from their homes in the eastern regions of Burma; and if he will make a statement. [202862]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK has not made an independent estimate of the number of people displaced from their homes in eastern Burma. However, in October 2004, the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) estimated that the number of people displaced from their homes in eastern Burma was at least 526,000. The TBBC estimated that of these people, 365,000 were living in temporary settlements in areas administered by the ethnic minority cease-fire groups; 77,000 were living in designated relocation sites in areas administered by the Burmese authorities; and 84,000 were in hiding in conflict areas.

The situation of these internally displaced people, and that of many other poor people in rural Burma, is extremely vulnerable. Reliable statistics are not available. But access to education and primary health care is limited, and poverty is widespread. DFID is working with the UN, International Committee of the Red Cross and others to help improve access to these populations and to provide protection and assistance to them.

Food Aid (Southern Africa)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will estimate for each

country in southern Africa in the period between now and the next harvest *(a)* how many people will have insufficient food, *(b)* what the country's overall food surplus or deficit will be and *(c)* how much food aid has been pledged by donors. [202851]

Hilary Benn: The UN and the Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs) have estimated that around 5.6 million people in southern Africa will be food insecure until June 2005. There is, however, some debate as to how many of these require emergency food relief and how many are part of the caseload of people who are affected by structural, long-term food insecurity outside crisis situations, and for whom short term food aid is an inappropriate and unsustainable response.

Estimates from the Food and Early Warning System Network (FEWS-NET) indicate that the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region will have a surplus of 1.9 million tonnes of cereals in the 2004–05 growing season, after allowing for planned imports. The situation varies quite considerably for individual countries both at national, sub national and household levels however, and VAC assessments will remain important in determining the appropriate level of short-term, emergency response.

Donors have already covered 80 per cent of the food aid requirements set out in the current UN Consolidated Appeal for southern Africa, covering the period to December 2004. The WFP plans a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation to cover January 2005 to December 2007 and has appealed for $404 million of food aid assistance. Most donors are currently considering their response to this latest appeal.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to promote cash-based and income generating initiatives in place of food aid in southern Africa. [202852]

Hilary Benn: In many southern African countries, significant numbers of poor people are food insecure even when there is no food crisis. Ill health, unemployment, and lack of other means to obtain food (production, welfare payments, or family and non-governmental support) all contribute to a longer-term, structural food insecurity problem.

DFID is increasing its support for income generating initiatives, and is encouraging the development of cash transfer programmes (as part of wider poverty reduction efforts in partnership with Governments), in order to address the long-term vulnerability issue underlying the present food insecurity in the region.

In Zambia, DFID is working with Government to implement cash transfers as part of a wider social protection policy aimed at vulnerable, food insecure groups. In Lesotho, DFID is supporting agricultural income generating programmes as an alternative to food aid provision. DFID is also keen to explore how the Government of Lesotho's plans to pay pensions to senior citizens can be developed to provide cash transfers for a wider group of vulnerable, food insecure people. In Malawi, DFID is supporting the development of Government's new National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. This builds on experience in Ethiopia and Zambia in order to tackle the underlying causes of chronic food insecurity by raising agricultural productivity and providing more efficient safety nets to people who are predictably food insecure.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government take to ensure that responses to short-term food deficits in southern Africa do not undermine longer-term development. [202853]

Hilary Benn: DFID is very concerned and aims to ensure that short-term responses to food insecurity does not jeopardise longer-term approaches to sustainable development.

In southern Africa, DFID has been important supporters of the Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VAC) at county and regional levels. This support has given us detailed information on the numbers of food insecure people who will require emergency assistance and, equally important, enables us to understand what responses are most appropriate to long-term food insecurity in the region. The VAC reports clearly underline that food aid alone is not an appropriate solution to underlying food insecurity conditions in southern Africa.

DFID's support for these country-owned VACs has stimulated discussions about longer-term responses to vulnerability, moving beyond food aid. DFID country programmes in Malawi, Zambia, and Lesotho are already acting on these recommendations and are incorporating a wider range of responses, including cash transfers, into longer-term poverty plans.

Renewable Natural Resources

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his plans are for archiving each of the programmes in the Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy in accordance with the Public Records Act 1958. [202286]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Public Records Acts apply to records created by or belonging to Crown Departments and certain public bodies. Information held by programmes contracted under DFID's Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy is the property of the contractors. Results from these programmes are reported to DFID and made publicly available through the Natural Resources Information System: found at www.narsis.org. Work is currently under way in DFID to develop a new knowledge management system that will ensure the continued availability of this information when the programmes end.

Zimbabwe

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contingency plans are in place to ensure that food aid, if required in Zimbabwe over the next few months, is distributed fairly on the basis of humanitarian needs. [202818]

Hilary Benn: Earlier this year the Government of Zimbabwe announced a bumper maize harvest of 2.4 million metric tonnes and declared that international food aid will not be required in the period up to the next harvest, around April 2005. Several independent

surveys have suggested that the actual harvest was considerably less than the Government has claimed. The recently released Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment (ZimVAC) indicates that 2.3 million people in the rural areas and 2.5 million people in urban areas will be unable to meet their food requirements in the 'hungry season' preceding the next harvest. Meanwhile, the Government of Zimbabwe appears to be importing substantial amounts of grain. Without accurate information about production or imports, it is difficult to assess food security prospects for the coming months. Donors, UN agencies and others are monitoring the situation closely.

After the last harvest, the Government of Zimbabwe restricted the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to distributing only limited amounts of food aid, mainly through schools and clinics, reaching approximately 600,000 people per month. At this rate, there was a danger that the WFP grain stocks in Zimbabwe carried over from last year's humanitarian operations would spoil before distribution. Faced with the alternative that the WFP would export the grains to other countries in the region where they are needed, the Government of Zimbabwe recently authorised the WFP to undertake a large-scale "one-off" food distribution to 1.8 million of the poorest people in areas experiencing the most severe food shortages, to take place as soon as possible.

This food distribution, likely to be the only donor-funded food distribution at scale during the present season, will be implemented using the same procedures as applied in previous WFP humanitarian operations. Political pressure on agencies implementing relief programmes may increase over the coming months; however, to date such donor-funded programmes have remained relatively free of political interference. DFID Zimbabwe is working closely with the WFP, the UN system and our partner organisations to emphasise adherence to procedures that ensure assistance reaches those in most need. Any incidences of irregularity will be comprehensively reported, investigated and dealt with appropriately, as in previous years.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Accountancy Services

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total cost to her Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202369]

Ms Hewitt: Total costs to the DTI for accountancy services are detailed in the following table.

£ million

	1. Accounts Services Provision	*2. PFI Agreement*	*3. System Upgrade*	*4. Services to Internal Audit*
2002–03	2.7	1.4	5	0.4
2003–04	3.2	1.4	3.5	0.4

1. The Department entered into a contract for the provision of accounts services with Amey plc, effective from 1 April 2002. The contract covers a 12 year period with a break option at seven years and covers a number of additional services not provided under the previous contract.
2. The Department entered into a PFI agreement to maintain hardware to support accounts services provision. The PFI agreement continues until September 2008.
3. The Department implemented an updated financial accounting system in September 2003.
4. Internal Audit services to the Department are delivered under a strategic partnership arrangement with Ernst and Young.

British Summer Time

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will bring forward legislation to make British summer time permanent and end the biannual time change. [201793]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government have no plans to alter the present summer time arrangements, but we shall continue to listen to the arguments for and against change.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the *(a)* economic and *(b)* safety impact of the biannual time change. [201794]

Mr. Sutcliffe: A European Directive harmonises the dates when summer time begins and ends across EC member states as the last Sundays in March and October respectively, and each member state is obliged to move their clocks by one hour at 1.00 am GMT on that date. The purpose of the Directive is to assist planning by ensuring uniformity in summer time dates across the community, thus removing uncertainty for industry and the public in general about Summer Time dates across EC member states.

Given these arrangements, the Government have not undertaken any research specifically addressing the economic or safety impacts of the biannual time change, other than as part of the consultation document published in June 1989 ("Summer Time—A Consultation Document" (Cm 722), which set out the more important arguments and facts about existing summer time arrangements and proposals for change in terms of their economic and social effects, and which concluded that the issues revolved around the basis of opinion and judgment rather than any balance sheet of gains and losses.

In addition, the Department for Transport has previously commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory to update and refine earlier research on the possible impact of the adoption of Central European time on the number of road accident casualties. The results were published on 14 October 1998.

Business Support

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list spending on *(a)* business support products and *(b)* administration by (i) the Small Business Service, (ii) other departmental support for small business and (iii) innovation within the departmental activity of Commercial Best Practice and Enterprise for each year since 1997. [201180]

Nigel Griffiths: The following tables show *(a)* the total spend on business support products, *(b)* the total spending on administration by the Small Business Service on all activities, and *(c)* spending on administration for other departmental support for small

business and innovation within the departmental activity of Commercial Best Practice and Enterprise. A detailed analysis of Small Business Service spend by specific products or areas of expenditure cannot be identified other than at disproportionate cost.

Business support

Financial year	*£ million Net spending*
1997–98	565.9
1998–99	582.4
1999–2000	590.8
2000–01	607.8
2001–02	684.0
2002–03	717.2
2003–04	712.3

Small Business Service administration costs (all activities)

Financial year	*£ million Net spending*
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	n/a
1999–2000	n/a
2000–01	10.2
2001–02	13.4
2002–03	18.0
2003–04	19.3

Other administration costs in support of small business and innovation within the departmental activity of commercial best practice and enterprise

Financial year	*£ million Net spending*
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	129.9
1999–2000	112.4
2000–01	96.6
2001–02	93.0
2002–03	97.2
2003–04	104.6

Butane Fuel

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the proportion of cigarette lighters being used in the UK which have been imported. [203160]

Jacqui Smith: The Office for National Statistics' Prodcom Report PRA 36639 (Product Sales and Trade(Other Manufacturing) identifies no sales of cigarette lighters from UK manufacturers' own production from 2000 to 2003, though some very small scale production may not be covered. The UK market is essentially met by imports.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of butane lighter fuel used in the UK in the last period for which figures are available was produced in the UK. [203161]

Jacqui Smith: Consumption of butane in the UK was 915,000 tonnes in 2003, of which 714,000 tonnes was consumed for non-energy use. About 20 per cent. of these amounts were imported. It is not possible to disaggregate how much butane was used in lighters and what proportion of that was UK produced.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the size of the UK market for butane lighter fuel. [203162]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not available

Competitiveness Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the outcome was of the Competitiveness Council held 25 and 26 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [201338]

Ms Hewitt: I attended the Competitiveness Council on 25 November and my noble Friend Lord Sainsbury of Turville attended on 26 November. Lord Sainsbury also attended the first ever Space Council, a joint meeting of the Council of the European Union and Council of the European Space Agency, on 25 November.

The Council took note of a report from the presidency on the current EU economic situation and welcomed the Commission's Competitiveness Package, consisting of the Commission's Competitiveness Report 2004, the Innovation Scoreboard and the Enterprise Policy Scoreboard. In discussion, Ministers emphasised the need to progress the regulatory reform agenda, particularly in developing more robust competitiveness impact assessment.

Ministers discussed the Council's approach to the Lisbon Mid Term Review and their views on the recent report of the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok. The Council broadly welcomed this report as a helpful basis for the Mid Term Review and agreed with the recommendation that stressed the need to focus on growth, employment and productivity as preconditions for social cohesion and sustainable development. Ministers also recognised that the Competitiveness Council had a lead role to play in three out of the five priority areas identified in the Kok report (the knowledge society, the business climate, and the internal market) and co-responsibility for the other two (an inclusive labour market and an environmentally sustainable future). Member states agreed the need to take steps at all levels, particularly at member state level, to ensure the Lisbon goals are realised.

The Council adopted conclusions on Better Regulation and simplification of legislation. The UK welcomed the recent Commission progress report on improving impact assessment procedures, including boosting assessment of competitiveness impacts, and stressed again the importance of regulatory reform, with support from a number of member states. The Council also approved a list of 15 simplification priorities, which will now be sent to the Commission for further consideration.

The Council had a policy debate on the draft REACH regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals), based around a presidency report of discussions so far in the ad hoc

Working Group on Chemicals. A number of issues were discussed, including REACH impact assessment, data requirements for low-volume substances and the joint submission of data (including cost sharing). On the latter, the UK presented a paper jointly with Hungary promoting the One Substance, One Registration (OSOR) principle. In conclusion, the Council instructed its preparatory bodies to consider these key issues in greater detail, taking account of competitiveness issues (particularly for SMEs) human health and environmental issues, simplification of administrative processes and efficient use of resources.

The Council had its first discussion on the draft directive establishing a general legal framework for services in the internal market designed to eliminate obstacles to freedom of establishment for service providers and free movement of services between member states. In discussion, Council underlined the political and economic significance of the proposed directive in the context of the Lisbon Strategy and the realisation of an internal market in services. Member states also discussed the country of origin principle, administrative simplification and administrative cooperation. I reiterated the UK's support for the market opening objectives of this proposed directive and our support in principle for the country of origin principle, subject to certain assurances on health and safety issues. The Council will return to this dossier at future meetings.

The Council agreed on a general approach to a directive on cross-border mergers of limited liability companies governed by the laws of different member states. UK voted in favour.

The Council unanimously agreed a proposed regulation on the monitoring of trade in drug precursors between the Community and third countries. UK supported this measure, which regulates trade in chemicals that can be used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The Council had an exchange of views on the textiles and clothing industry, taking into account the Commission's communication of the recommendations of the High Level Group for this sector, which looked at improving the industry's competitiveness. Council conclusions were adopted.

The Council discussed developments in international negotiations on the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) and approved a modification to the Commission's negotiating mandate. This revised mandate should enable the Commission to finalise negotiations with international partners. The modified negotiating directives also confirm European support for Cadarache in France as the preferred site for ITER. The UK agreed with these modifications.

Ministers held a policy debate on future European research policy. The presidency's conclusions emphasised the importance of research policy in the context of the Lisbon Strategy. There was broad agreement on the principles for the next Framework Programme (FP7) and a high degree of support for funding of basic research as part of this programme. Lord Sainsbury emphasised the need for a formal Commission proposal on FP7 as early as possible in 2005 and outlined the UK's vision for FP7, stressing the need to create world-class centres of excellence in Europe to attract the best young researchers. The Commission said that they hoped to present formal proposals on FP7 by April 2005.

Five items were taken under Any Other Business. Commissioner Verheugen gave a progress report on the shipbuilding-related LeaderSHIP 2015 initiative. The presidency gave Council information on the fifth Euro-med Conference on Industry, held at Caserta in October, at which the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise and "Caserta declaration" were adopted. Further to discussion at the last Competitiveness Council, the presidency provided information regarding efforts by member states to improve their records on timely transposition of internal market legislation. The presidency provided information on conferences held during the Dutch presidency relating to competitiveness. The Council took note of a UK paper reminding the Commission of March 2004 Council Conclusions that invited the Commission to consider establishing a European Centres of Enterprise award scheme, with a view to the scheme's introduction during 2005. Commissioner Verheugen expressed support for taking the scheme forward.

The first ever Space Council took place (a joint and concomitant meeting of the Council of the European Union and European Space Agency (ESA) at ministerial level). Ministers discussed the development of a European Space Policy and a set of orientations were agreed that set out the general approach and some next steps. These highlighted the strategic importance of space activities to a broad spectrum of European policies and stated that the European Space Programme (ESP) would provide a flexible, common and inclusive framework for EU, ESA and other stakeholders to operate within. UK supported the orientations and the development of a realistic and affordable ESP as a way of coordinating European space activities. Further meetings of the Space Council may take place during 2005.

Consumer Direct (West Midlands)

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to launch Consumer Direct in the West Midlands; and if she will make a statement. [201597]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Under current plans the Consumer Direct service is expected to be launched in the West Midlands region during financial year 2006–07.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in her Department to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202379]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has a target of 15 days for responding to correspondence from Members of Parliament and Peers and for responding to members of the public in line with Whitehall Standards.

Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament and Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by her Department in each of the last two years. [202374]

Ms Hewitt: My Department undertakes a wide variety of projects as part of on-going maintenance and improvements of its current stock. The cost of refurbishment projects involving significant works to the building services and fabric of the DTI HQ estate for the last two complete financial years is as follows:

£000

Financial year	*Refurbishment*
2002/03	1,,680
2003/04	2,300

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost has been of criminal damage to her Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202377]

Ms Hewitt: The Department does not record separately the cost of criminal damage but we are not aware of any significant expenditure over the last two years.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in her Department in each of the last two years. [202370]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has incurred no costs relating to the DTI HQ estate for new builds, demolitions or new private finance initiative building projects over the past two years.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on energy costs incurred by her Department in each of the last two years. [202372]

Ms Hewitt: The Department procures its energy via competitive tender. Expenditure on energy on the DTI HQ estate is £942,144 (2002–03) and £958,719 (2003–04) of which 34 per cent. was from renewable sources (average for the two years).

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by her Department in each of the last two years. [202376]

Ms Hewitt: There have been no costs in the last two years associated with the in house canteen. The cost of other catering services for the London Headquarters estate was approximately £1 million in 2002–03 and £1.2 million in 2003–04.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in her Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202170]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Responsibility for the provision of mobile telephones for official purposes and for payment of associated call charges was devolved to individual directorates, agencies and NDPBs at the end of March 1993. Since August 1997, the DTI has increasingly made use of the central Mobile Telecommunications contract managed by the Office of Government Commerce. This contract allows DTI users access to mobile telephone services and products at advantageous prices ensuring that the Department obtains good value for money. Due to the devolved responsibility for mobile telephone management the only information that can be provided at non-disproportionate cost is the total expenditure with DTI's main suppliers of mobile telephones and the number of handsets supplied through the central OGC contract since 2002.

	£
1998	90,881
1999	263,123
2000	226,695
2001	342,964
2002	[1]342,881
2003	[2]410,372

[1] 549 mobile telephones on the central contract.
[2] 776 mobile telephones on the central contract.

Cost figures are not available for 1997 due to a change in the Department's accounting system over that period.

Electrical Accidents

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured due to electrical accidents in their homes; and how many of these took place in (i) bathrooms and (ii) kitchens. [203192]

Mr. Sutcliffe: DTI no longer provides a service on accident statistics. Information on fatalities can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk tel. 0870 154 5500 and the Office for National Statistics: www.statistics.gov.uk tel. 0845 601 3034; or for non-fatalities from The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents: www.rospa.com tel. 0870 777 2171.

Electricity Generation (Renewables)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much capital grant aid she is planning to provide to *(a)* wind, *(b)* solar, *(c)* tidal, *(d)* hydro and *(e)* thermal generators of electricity in the forthcoming financial year; and if she will make a statement. [203073]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The total for wind, through the Capital Grants for Round 1 offshore wind farms programme is £117 million.

For solar photovoltaic (PV) via the Major PV Demonstration Programme the total budget is £31 million, this includes additional funding of £6 million announced in September 2004. Along with the PV funding there are also grants for solar thermal projects available through the Clear Skies programme (the programme has £12.5 million in funding though this is not specifically earmarked for solar but for all eligible renewables), which includes an extra £2.5 million also announced in September. Both these schemes ran to March 2006.

With regards to wave and tidal in August the Government announced a £50 million Marine Renewables Development Fund that will provide continued support to wave and tidal -stream technologies. The fund will be primarily focused on supporting a number of pre-commercial demonstrations. Options for delivering the fund are currently under consideration and we will undertake an informal consultation on our proposals in the new year.

Some Hydro and Thermal schemes qualify under the Clears Skies programme.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the potential effects of electricity power generators buying and selling *(a)* gas and *(b)* other fuels on future markets on the emissions trading scheme. [202081]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We expect the EU Emissions Trading Schemes (ETS) to encourage generators to switch from using high carbon fuels (e.g. coal or oil) to lower or zero carbon fuels (e.g. gas or hydro). Such switching will have an effect on forward markets for the different fuels. The extent of this switching will be determined by the price of carbon, as well as the relative fuel prices and other costs associated with power generation from different types of plant. The price of carbon will be determined across the whole of the EU. The differences in behaviour of individual UK market participants are expected to have only a minimal impact on the price of carbon. The potential effect of differing assumptions about the ETS on the generation fuel mix was assessed in the study (Implications of the EU ETS for the Power Sector—Annex C), for DTI, by ILEX in September 2003: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euets.shtml

EU Social Chapter

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what her estimate is of the administrative costs to UK employers of providing the EU Social Chapter rights; and what methodology she used for calculating the cost; [202138]

(2) what estimate she has made of the cost to UK employers of establishing policies associated with EU Social Chapter rights; and what methodology she used to make that estimate. [202540]

Mr. Sutcliffe: DTI has estimated the administrative cost to UK employers of transposing the Social Chapter Directives in its Regulatory Impact Assessments. The Directives in question concern:

(1) Parental leave (including the 1999 extension to the implementing Regulations)

(2) European Works Councils

(3) Part-time work

(4) Burden of proof in sex discrimination cases

(5) Fixed term employees

(6) Information and consultation.

The total administrative(or implementation(costs to UK employers associated with the provision of these EU Social Chapter rights is £0.68 million a year. Additionally, the DTI identified one-off implementation costs, estimated to be in the region of £3.3 million. It should be noted that the Department's Regulatory Impact Assessments also highlighted significant benefits associated with the Social Chapter Directives.

Faraday Partnerships

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has for future investment in the Faraday Partnerships. [202581]

Ms Hewitt: Under the guidance of the newly appointed Technology Strategy Board, my Department is now preparing a call for Knowledge Transfer Networks in specific technologies. These Networks are a new product based upon the example and success of the 24 Faraday Partnerships and will provide what we believe to be an excellent opportunity for relevant Faraday Partnerships to bid for continuing, or even increased, DTI support.

Fuel Poverty

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many *(a)* people and *(b)* households living in fuel poverty there are in (i) Southwark and (ii) Greater London; [203393]

(2) what her estimate is of the number of children living in households in fuel poverty in *(a)* Southwark and *(b)* Greater London. [203394]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Malcolm Bruce) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 78W. This sets out how the fuel poverty figures for England are produced, and highlights the fact that we are unable to provide estimates for sub-regional level.

The latest available data for Government office regions suggest that, in 2001, there were 148,000 households in fuel poverty in the Government office for London area but the national statistics have altered since then and it is likely that the London figures have changed too so this is an unreliable figure as a reflection of the situation in 2004. Similarly, It is not possible to produce estimates for the number of children in the cited areas because of the very small sample sizes involved.

Iran

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the United Kingdom has offered assistance to Iran to *(a)* build a nuclear power plant and *(b)* provide nuclear technology for such a plant. [202753]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No.

IT Graduates

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she proposes to take to ensure that the number of students who graduate from information technology courses reaches the levels that are need by the IT industry as stated by the e-Skills UK and Gartner Consulting research published on 1 November. [200740]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: DTI recognises the need for the UK's training and education in IT skills to meet the needs of industry and is working closely with e-Skills UK, the Sector Skills Council for IT, to produce an industry-led long term strategy to achieve this. e-Skills UK is currently developing a Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) to take forward the issues identified in the IT industry research.

The SSA, which is due to be launched in early 2005, will include an action plan for employers, educators and Government which DTI will be supporting together with DfES, the Devolved Administrations, Regional Development Agencies and other key stakeholders. In addition, as part of the Government's Skills Strategy published in 2003, e-Skills UK is leading a IT user skills cross sector strategy to improve the links between supply and demand for IT education and training.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list her official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans she has to establish a public register of such information. [202403]

Ms Hewitt: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official spokesman regularly provides details of Minister's public engagements.

National Minimum Wage

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in the Manchester, Withington constituency have benefited from the national minimum wage since its introduction. [201924]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The latest low pay data from the ONS show that 1.1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the national minimum wage. The DTI will provide estimates of national minimum wage beneficiaries by region by early January 2005. It is unlikely that figures will be available for the Withington constituency due to small sample size.

Paternity Leave

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the percentage of new fathers who have taken up the right to paid paternity leave since its introduction. [203359]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We are waiting for the full set of figures on the take up of paternity pay that has been reclaimed by employers before making an assessment. We expect to receive this information from the Inland Revenue in February 2005.

Plutonium Shipment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what liability was agreed by the Office of Civil Nuclear Security in respect of the shipment of plutonium from the United States to France aboard the Pacific Teal and Pacific Pintail. [200715]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: None. Liability arrangements for the shipment were a matter for the relevant authorities in the United States and France.

Post Office

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the (i) social and (ii) economic role of (A) urban and (B) rural post offices. [202236]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department has made no such study. But the Government fully recognises the social and economic role of post offices, regarding it as most important that people have good access to postal and Government services, and is committed to doing all it can to ensure a viable Post Office network for the future.

For the rural network the Post Office has made a firm commitment to maintain the network and prevent avoidable closures. The Government has underpinned that with £750 million of funding.

For the urban network the Government is providing up to £180 million available to fund compensation payments to subpostmasters leaving the network under Post Office Ltd's reinvention programme and up to £30 million to fund improvements at offices that remain.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to increase the amount of money available to revitalise the urban post office network; and if she will make a statement. [202237]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department has no plans to increase its funding for the urban post office network. Up to £180 million is available to compensate sub-postmasters leaving the network under Post Office Ltd's urban reinvention programme and up to £30 million to fund improvements to remaining urban post offices. Funds remain available for both purposes.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will encourage banks to enable their customers *(a)* to access bank accounts and *(b)* conduct other transactions at post offices; and if she will make a statement. [202238]

Mr. Sutcliffe: More than 20 million current accounts are accessible at post offices and it is Post Office Limited's strategy to build on this. The Government would urge all banks to provide their customers with access to their accounts through post offices but we recognise that the decision to do so is a commercial matter for the individual institutions concerned.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to ask the post office *(a)* to simplify the post office card account application process and *(b)* to allow card accounts to be opened at post offices; and if she will make a statement. [202566]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. The Department of Trade and Industry has no role in the post office card account, which is delivered by Post Office Limited under contract to the Department for Work (DWP) and Pensions, Inland Revenue and the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency. I understand that there is no need to change the process, which is already simple and working well. Independent research commissioned by the DWP shows that more than 80 per cent. of customers found the process of opening a card account to be easy. Over 4 million customers have already opened a Post Office card account.

Power Stations

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to encourage the retrofitting of clean-coal technology to UK power stations; and what percentage reduction in carbon emissions from such stations she estimates such action would achieve. [202737]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* DTI is developing a Carbon Abatement Technology Strategy to address the future requirements for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from large-scale power generation in the UK using fossil fuels, including coal. The issue of retrofitting of cleaner-coal technology to UK power stations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions is being considered within this strategy which is due to be published in the new year.

In addition, the EU emissions trading scheme comes into effect from 1 January 2005. This scheme will encourage UK power stations to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions. The retrofitting of cleaner coal technologies is one of many options available to power station operators to achieve this.

The actual carbon dioxide emissions reduction from retrofitting of more efficient cleaner coal technologies to UK power stations would depend on the specific design and operating conditions of the technology fitted and that which it was replacing. However, as an indication, savings in the range of 10–20 per cent. of carbon dioxide emissions should be possible with the retrofitting of such technologies to coal power stations.

Radioactive Chocolate

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the storage of chocolate radioactively contaminated following the fire at Windscale in 1957. [200708]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A fire broke out in Pile 1 on 10 October 1957, and was extinguished on 11 October. Radioactivity was released to the environment. The main public health concern was the contamination of locally produced milk by the short-lived isotope iodine 131. Milk produced within 80 square miles of the site was banned from 12 October, and the ban was extended to 200 square miles on 15 October.

At that time, the chocolate manufacturer Rowntree ran a factory in Egremont, close to the Windscale site. Records in one UKAEA file show that on 8 November 1957 Rowntree wrote to seek compensation for 90 tons of chocolate milk crumb manufactured between 11 and 15 October, which they believed to have been contaminated as a result of the Windscale fire. UKAEA contested this claim on the grounds that

"the crumb is completely safe for consumption owing to the short half-life of the radioactive iodine which was the sole source of contamination".

The correspondence continued for some months, culminating in an exchange of letters between the Chairman of Rowntree and Sir Donald Perrott of UKAEA. Rowntree acknowledged

"we fully accept your advice that, as a matter of scientific fact, the 90 tons of crumb do not represent a radioactive hazard",

but stated that in the interest of customer relations and commercial prudence, they wished to have the crumb destroyed or disposed of. They sought the UKAEA's help to do so, and offered to meet the costs incurred. UKAEA agreed

"to accept responsibility for destroying this material"

on Rowntree's behalf.

Science and Technology Select Committee

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will investigate the allegations made by Dr. Robin Lovell-Badge of improper coercion of Task Force members by Professor Colin Blakemore, concerning the Medical Research Council Task Force examining the future of the National Institute for Medical Research, in his evidence to the Science and Technology Select Committee on 1 December; and if she will make a statement. [202185]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The Science and Technology Committee is currently conducting an inquiry into the future of the Medical Research Council's (MRC) National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). I understand that this will include the process by which MRC reached its decisions. As the allegations regarding improper coercion were made during an oral evidence session for this inquiry, I will wait with interest for the Select Committee's report and recommendations before deciding whether any further action is needed.

Telephone Preference Service

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the

powers to *(a)* issue penalties and *(b)* take other actions against companies and individuals who do not adhere to the requirements of the Telephone Preference Service. [202090]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has responsibility for the enforcement of the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) scheme. A company or individual which breaches their enforcement notice commits a criminal offence subject to a fine of up to £5,000 in a magistrates court.

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the outcome was of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council held on 29 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [201341]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As Minister for Energy and E Commerce, I represented the UK at the EU Energy Council in Brussels on 29 November.

The Council considered several matters of interest to the United Kingdom. Chief among these were the Energy Services Directive and the Security of Electricity Supply Directive.

A general approach on the Security of Electricity Supply Directive was agreed, though the Commission, which seeks a more interventionist regulator-led approach to promote actively new interconnector build and thereby competition, maintained a reserve on Article 7 on interconnector construction.

Council conclusions were agreed on the Commission's Communication on the share of Renewable Energy in the EU.

An orientation debate was held on the proposed Energy End Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive. Member States expressed a strong preference for indicative not mandatory energy saving targets though views were mixed on whether a uniform target at EU level would be helpful; many delegations preferred individually set targets. There was general recognition that the public sector could play a leading role in promoting energy efficiency but the majority of Member States opposed specific targets for the sector. On the question of the placing of obligations on suppliers there was a clear preference for a broader more flexible approach rather than a focus on one energy efficiency approach—energy services. There was broad agreement that a harmonised approach to measuring energy savings was needed, but there was a split on whether a top down or bottom up approach was best.

The UK noted our support for a uniform, but indicative, six-year target taking account of already captured efficiency gains; a more broadly defined obligation on energy suppliers to actively offer and promote energy efficiency; and agreement with the Presidency proposal for either a top down or a hybrid approach to measuring efficiency gains.

The Commission's preference for a mandatory target reflected what they saw as the poor record of achievement against indicative targets and they suggested that flexible mandatory targets might be the way forward. The Presidency concluded by proposing an annual debate on progress towards achieving indicative national targets, the first of which would fall to the UK Presidency, and looked forward to concluding the dossier in the Luxembourg Presidency.

The Commission reported progress on the negotiations of the Energy Community for South East Europe Treaty, which it hoped would be a model for other sectors. Signature was foreseen for 2005. Some Member States had substantive comments on the language regime, others on the distinction between participating and observing Member States. The next negotiation meeting on 13 December will be an opportunity to discuss outstanding matters.

The Commission reported on its communication on progress on the EU/Russia energy dialogue 2000–04, claiming it showed positive outcomes across a range of fields. More progress in Russia was needed on the reform process, energy efficiency and Kyoto implementation, promoting and protecting investment and positive developments in the gas and oil markets. The Commission undertook fully to involve Member States.

The Presidency concluded by noting, in the context of the recent "Energy in Motion" conference aimed at improving cleaner road traffic, that transport accounted for a third of energy consumption. The conference conclusions would be discussed at the next Transport and Environment Councils and the Commission were urged to take account of them.

Luxembourg finished by saying they would take forward the Dutch Presidency approaches and singled out Energy TENS as a priority dossier.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations her Department has made to the Greek Government on the export of the Typhoon aircraft. [202988]

Jacqui Smith: The proposal to export Typhoon aircraft to Greece is being led by Germany, and the UK is playing a full part in supporting it as a Typhoon partner nation. The Defence Export Services Organisation leads on this for the UK.

Wind Farms

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of applications to build wind farms *(a)* were accepted, *(b)* were rejected and *(c)* are ongoing in the last full year for which figures are available. [201327]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My Department is responsible for considering applications for consent under the Electricity Act 1989 for wind farm projects of more than 50MW in England and Wales and more than 1MW offshore of those countries. My Department also considers applications for Orders for wind farm developments in England under the Transport and Works Act 1992.

In 2003 which is the last full year for which figures are available, the DTI received consent applications for offshore wind farms and three onshore wind farms, each of which is still under consideration.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which EU-Burmese joint ventures have been affected by Annex II of the Council Common Position on Burma 2004/730/CFSP and Annex IV of Council Regulation (EC) 798/2004. [202845]

Mr. Straw: I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply I gave him on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1778W.

We are aware that one EU company has claimed that they have been erroneously implicated through the listings of state owned enterprises in Annex II of the Common Position on Burma 2004/730/CFSP and Annex IV of Council Regulation 798/2004.

We are not aware at present that any other EU-Burmese joint ventures have been affected.

China

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Governor of Guangdong Province in China during his recent visit to the UK; what assessment he has made of the implications for the UK's bilateral relations with China of the economic growth of Guangdong Province; and if he will make a statement. [200684]

Mr. Rammell: The Governor of Guangdong, Huang Huahua, visited London from 24 to 27 October to promote business opportunities. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary was unable to meet the Governor. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister met the Governor at a major business conference held at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre attended by 1,300 British, Chinese and European representatives. This event saw around £2 billion worth of contracts signed, underlining the success of commercial contracts between the UK and various Guangdong businesses. Economic growth in China and Guangdong Province offers great opportunities for UK business. The Government are working hard with business to realise this potential.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [200846]

Mr. Straw: The information is as follows:

(a) 20 working days

(b) 20 working days

Cyprus

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it a condition of the United Kingdom's support for opening sea ports in northern Cyprus to EU trade that such ports adhere to *(a)* existing and future European ports directives and *(b)* health and safety requirements; and how he expects such rules will be enforced. [202785]

Mr. MacShane: The UK supports the EU's efforts to pass a regulation to enable preferential direct trade between the north of Cyprus and the EU as a way to fulfil the mandate by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 26 April to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community. The draft regulation has not, however, been passed nor has its substance been discussed in detail. When this happens, the Government will want to ensure that the UK's and EU's legitimate interests are protected.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [200836]

Mr. Rammell: The total cost to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for accountancy services in each of the last two years was:

	£
2002–03	1,772,000
2003–04:	718,000

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [200838]

Mr. Rammell: The UK Buildings of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have suffered criminal damage on one occasion within the past two years: in November 2004. The cost of this damage was £2,135.25, excluding VAT.

Data regarding the cost of criminal damage to the overseas estate could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [200839]

Mr. Rammell: The recorded energy costs incurred by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in each of the last two years are:

		£
	UK	*Overseas*
2002–03	1,407,600	10,705,423
2003–04	2,264,018	10,422,585

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [200841]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) spent £338,159 in 2002–03, and £745,975 in 2003–04, on refurbishment work in the FCO's properties in the UK.

In 2002–03 we spent £2,380,000 on overseas refurbishment projects exceeding £250,000 in value. In 2003–04 there were no overseas refurbishment projects valued at more than £250,000. Responsibility for refurbishment projects overseas valued at less than £250,000 is devolved to overseas posts, and totals could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of refurbishing each Ministerial Private Office was in the last two years. [200842]

Mr. Rammell: The cost of refurbishing Ministerial Private Offices in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during the past two years has been:

2002–03: Nil

2003–04: £17,047

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total external spend by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200854]

Mr. Rammell: The information requested is as follows.

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Total external spend	£106,459	£180,073
Full-time equivalent consultants	0	1
Number of billed consultancy days	80	264
Implied average cost	£1,342 per day	£682 per day
Number of consultancy firms	3 in period	

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has two Private Finance Initiative arrangements in place, details of which I gave in my reply to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 28 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1388W.

European Union

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [200851]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is responsible for the UK's general policy on the EU, and accordingly has an interest in the implementation of all EU measures in the UK. Indeed the hon. Member will have noted the joint measures announced by my right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the pre-Budget report for ensuring that businesses do not face unnecessary burdens from European law, including though effective transposition. However, there have been no directives or regulations in the past two years which the FCO has had the responsibility of implementing in the UK.

Hamas

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made in the week prior to 1 December to *(a)* the EU High Representative, *(b)* other governments and *(c)* other parties regarding contacts with Hamas. [202788]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Following Dr. Solana's interview with the Radio 4 Today programme on 25 November, my officials contacted Dr. Solana's spokeswoman to clarify what contacts, if any, Dr. Solana had had with Hamas. Dr. Solana's spokeswoman gave us the same response as contained in her statement of 25 November which I made reference to in my reply of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 174W. We have not had any other contacts with other governments or other parties in the last week regarding contacts with Hamas.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what has been the cost in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [200852]

Mr. Straw: Five cases have been brought against me as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under the Human Rights Act 1996. The cost in legal fees to date has been approximately £175,445 (but some cases are ongoing: more costs may be incurred, and some costs may be recovered). No compensation payments have been ordered or made.

Immigration

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received concerning the entry clearance operation in Dhaka, Bangladesh. [200939]

Mr. Mullin: Since 1 November, there have been 34 letters from hon. Members about entry clearance in Dhaka, seven from members of the public and two from solicitors.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many entry clearance officers there are in Dhaka, Bangladesh. [200940]

Mr. Mullin: Currently, there are 14 entry clearance officers (ECOs) in Dhaka. An additional four ECO positions have been recently approved. The visa section in Dhaka is headed up by three entry clearance managers, a head of Visa Services and a director of Visa Services.

Dhaka is also provided with seasonal relief staff. During 2004, 16 additional ECOs were posted to Dhaka working there for anything between one and six months.

India

Mr. Plaskitt: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Indian Government about investigations into the attacks on Sikhs in Delhi in 1984. [200042]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not discussed the 1984 attack on Sikhs in Delhi with the new Indian Government. This Government consider the attacks on the Sikhs in Delhi in 1984 as a matter of regret, and condemn the persecution of individuals or groups because of their religion or beliefs.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200620]

Mr. Rammell: The last figures available are for the financial year 2003–04. 98 per cent. of all invoices were paid within the 30-day period, 0.17 per cent. remained unpaid over 90 days.

Information concerning average payment times is not held electronically and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary re-signed to the Better Payment Practice Code in July 2003. We remain committed to the aim of paying all undisputed invoices within 30 days of receipt of invoice or goods or services, whichever is the later. We continue to monitor our performance and will, as in previous years, submit our annual return to the Small Business Service for inclusion in the League Table.

Iran

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Iran about the death of the Bahá'i Mr. Mir Naqi Kamali. [200928]

Mr. Rammell: We have received reports from Baha'i representatives in the UK about the circumstances of Mr. Kamali's death and other examples of discrimination against Baha'is in Iran. We have not raised the specific case of Mr. Kamali with the Iranian authorities, but have on many occasions raised our serious concerns about the situation of the Baha'i community in Iran. With our strong support, the EU presidency called on the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 24 November to express the EU's concern at demolition of Baha'i holy sites and discrimination against Baha'is for instance in access to education. The rights of Iran's religious minorities including the Baha'is has been an important theme of the EU/Iran Human Rights Dialogue, including the most recent round in June.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the treatment by the Iranian courts of offences committed against Bahá'ís. [200929]

Mr. Rammell: We have serious concerns about the situation of the Bahá'í community in Iran. We have received reports that Bahá'í in Iran have suffered intimidation and harassment and face difficulties in securing full and free access to the courts. We have raised our concerns with the Iranian authorities on many occasions, including through the EU/Iran human rights dialogue.

Iraq

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans coalition forces have to help those who have fled Fallujah in recent days to return home after the fighting is over; and whether the Iraqi Interim Government has requested assistance from coalition forces to do so. [199874]

Mr. Rammell: The Iraqi Interim Government are leading the humanitarian and reconstruction effort in Fallujah and the surrounding areas and are developing plans for the return of Internally Displaced Persons from Fallujah.

The Multi-National Force has established a Civil Military Operations Centre in Fallujah to facilitate the humanitarian and reconstruction effort, and the return of the Internally Displaced Persons, and has provided logistics and planning support. The Multi-National Force stands ready to provide further assistance as requested.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many members of the *(a)* coalition forces, *(b)* Multi-National Force and *(c)* Iraqi security forces have been (i) killed and (ii) injured by (A) terrorists and (B) insurgents since 1 June 2003; how many Iraqi citizens have been (1) killed and (2) injured by (x) terrorists and *(y)* insurgents since 1 June 2003; and if he will make a statement. [200496]

Mr. Rammell: We understand from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) that the number of Multi-National or coalition forces killed since 1 June 2003 is 1,172, of which 937 were killed in action. 22 UK service personnel have been killed in action since 1 June 2004. A further 15 have been killed in accidents and other incidents. Before August 2004, the MOD did not hold centrally figures for the total number of injuries sustained by UK Service personnel, or the causes of those injuries. Minor injuries or illnesses suffered by personnel who were treated in theatre and then returned to duty were not recorded other than on individual Service records. Since August 2004, 65 injuries have been sustained as a result of hostile action. Statistics are not collected for injuries sustained for other reasons.

We understand that since 15 June 2003, 907 Iraqi Security Forces have been killed and 2,374 injured.

We have no way of reliably estimating the total number of Iraqi civilians killed since June 2003 but we understand from the Iraqi Interim Government statistics, compiled from hospital records, that during the period 16 June 2004 to 10 September 2004 516 Iraqi civilians were killed and 2,016 injured directly as a result of attacks by the terrorists and insurgents.

Kashmir

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recent visit to Kashmir by the Prime Minister of India. [199822]

Mr. Alexander: The British Government welcome Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir, and his announcement in Srinagar of a significant economic package for the State. We also welcome the Indian Government's decision to withdraw a number of troops from Kashmir. The British Government hope that the improved dialogue between India and Pakistan will, in time, lead to a durable settlement of all the outstanding issues between the two countries, including Kashmir.

Mr. Nick Baker

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking in relation to Mr. Nick Baker who is in prison in Japan; whether he or his officials are in discussions concerning this case with Japanese Government Ministers or officials; and if he will make a statement. [200723]

Mr. Mullin: We are monitoring Mr. Baker's appeal against his conviction, which is continuing in the Japanese courts. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) raises Mr. Baker's case at ministerial and official level at every appropriate opportunity. The FCO remains in touch with Mr. Baker and his family about his case and will inform them immediately of any developments.

Overseas Visits

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visits have been made by *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* hon. Members to each of the UK posts in the EU since 2001. [200937]

Mr. MacShane: Identifying the number of visits by Ministers from all Government Departments and by hon. Members to all our EU posts would incur disproportionate cost.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers have, however, made a total of 172 bilateral visits since 2001 to the 24 other member states of the EU.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reason the UN Security Council has withdrawn reference to further measures to be taken against the Sudanese Government over their actions in Darfur in its latest resolution; and what position the British Government took with regard to this resolution. [200563]

Mr. Mullin: UN Security Council Resolution 1574, adopted unanimously in Nairobi on 19 November, reiterates the threat of further measures set out in resolutions 1556 and 1564. Operative Paragraph 12 of the resolution states the Council's decision,

> "in accordance with previous resolutions on Sudan, ... to monitor compliance by the parties with their obligations in that regard and, subject to a further decision of the Council, to take appropriate action against any party failing to fulfil its commitments".

The UK has been closely involved in the Resolution, which reiterates the need for the Government of Sudan and the Rebels to fulfil their obligations in resolving the problems in Darfur peacefully.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the signing of the peace treaty in Nairobi between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement based on the Naivasha protocols. [200564]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome the commitment made to the Security Council in Nairobi on 19 November by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement to conclude a comprehensive peace agreement by 31 December.

Technical talks under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development resumed in Nairobi on 26 November, and the Principals reconvened on 6 December with a view to resolving outstanding political issues before the end of the year.

Sustainable Timber

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the refurbishment projects that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment also comes from legal and sustainable sources. [200573]

Mr. Rammell: A refurbishment project valued at over £250,000[1] is presently in progress at the Sao Paulo Residence. We expect to start refurbishment projects valued at over £250,000 at the Kingston and Buenos Aires offices in the next six months. All Foreign and Commonwealth Office refurbishment and construction contracts require contractors to procure timber from legal and sustainable sources.

[1] Management of refurbishment projects overseas valued at less than £250,000 is devolved to overseas posts, and details could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of a central point of expertise on timber. [200574]

Mr. Rammell: In August 2004 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) wrote to all Government Departments requesting assistance with

funding to establish and maintain a Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET). At that time, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was unable to identify funds to support this Defra initiative.

However, following a further request from Defra, we are now reconsidering this decision, and will be writing to Defra shortly to clarify the situation. We support the objectives of the CPET, which will make a crucial contribution to UK efforts to procure legal and sustainable timber, as part of our wider policy addressing illegal logging.

UK Embassies

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff there were in each of the commercial departments of UK embassies in European countries in each of the last 10 years. [199937]

Mr. Alexander: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

United States

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the compatibility with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of a renewal of the Mutual Defence Agreement with the United States. [202005]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* There will be no removal of the Agreement between the UK and the US for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes/Mutual Defence Agreement with the US. However, there will be a renewal.

I can confirm that the Government are satisfied that the extension of the Agreement between the UK and the US for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes for a further 10 years is compatible with the UK's obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Video Conferencing Units

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [200575]

Mr. Rammell: There are nine room-based video conferencing units and two smaller desktop facilities installed in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the UK, and none in our agency, Wilton Park. Overseas, there are approximately 90 units, mostly room-based systems. Overall, around 40 per cent. of FCO offices world-wide have access to video conferencing facilities.

We are considering upgrading the technology used for video-conferencing and how best to increase its use, but these have not yet been translated into formal implementation plans.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Agenda for Change

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the extra costs that will result from the implementation of Agenda for Change in the Province. [202046]

Angela Smith: The cost of implementing the Agenda for Change agreement in Northern Ireland has been calculated using an approved UK Treasury Costing Model, and as such the same model has been applied the NHS within the other three UK countries. Additional funding, ranging from 1.43 per cent. on the pay bill in the first year (2004–05 for six months) to 6.25 per cent. on the non-medical staff pay bill in year five (2008–09) will be made available to Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) employers to meet the cost of Agenda for Change.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to address the concerns of radiographers in the Province regarding the impact of Agenda For Change on their profession. [202048]

Angela Smith: I am aware that the radiography profession recently voted to reject the new Agenda for Change pay system. However, the wider trade unions ballots indicated overwhelming acceptance of the new pay system and implementation of Agenda for Change has now commenced. It will include all radiography staff within the HPSS moving to the new pay arrangements.

There are ongoing national discussions between the four UK Health Departments and radiography trade union representatives to try and resolve the profession's concerns. We will continue to work with the profession's representatives to ensure their continued engagement with Government's plans to modernise the service.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the starting salary is of radiographers in the Province; and if he will estimate the starting salary for radiographers in the Province after implementation of Agenda For Change. [202049]

Angela Smith: The current starting salary for basic grade Radiographers is £18,240. However, graduate radiographers who have completed four years training have a starting salary of £18,915. Under the implementation of the Agenda for Change Pay System, all Radiography jobs will be subjected to a job matching or job evaluation process prior to the determination of salary. The process of job evaluation is designed to measure the job weight and ultimately recognises equal work of equal value. Accordingly, it would be unwise to try to estimate the starting salary for this post under Agenda for Change as this would negate the job matching and evaluation process.

Anti-TNF Medications

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are waiting to commence anti-TNF medications in the Province. [202594]

Angela Smith: Figures collected between September and December 2004 indicate that there are 422 people in Northern Ireland waiting to commence treatment with anti-TNF medications.

My Department remains committed to improving access to anti-TNFs and other specialist medicines. A further £1 million was earmarked for anti-TNF drugs in 2004–05 to allow Boards to increase the number of patients receiving anti-TNF treatment by at least 100.

Asbestosis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in the Province suffer from asbestosis. [202605]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Audiology

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the expenditure per head of population in the Province on audiology goods and services provision in each of the last three years. [201945]

Angela Smith: The information on which an estimate might be made is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Belfast City Airport

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the operators of Belfast City Airport on the recently proposed scheduling of services. [200918]

Angela Smith: Neither the Northern Ireland Office nor any of the 11 Departments of the NI administration has had discussions with the operators of BCA regarding the scheduling of flights.

BCA does operate under a Planning Agreement which limits its operating hours, the number of air transport movements, the number of seats and provides guidelines regarding the nature of approaches and the noise levels. The Planning Agreement does not include any reference to the scheduling of services.

Bowel Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce screening in the Province for bowel cancer. [202610]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to my answer of 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1361W, question reference 196346

Care Costs

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of providing *(a)* elderly, *(b)* hospital, *(c)* community, *(d)* maternity and child health, *(e)* family and childcare and *(f)* learning disability care in the Province was in each of the last five years. [201943]

Angela Smith: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Total trust expenditure in Northern Ireland

£ million

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Elderly care	337.5	358.9	388.8	413.3	473.6
Hospital	694.0	756.4	821.7	896.8	990.6
Community (excluding personal social services)	142.0	152.7	171.4	193.7	223.0
Maternity and child health	62.3	66.9	71.9	83.5	89.6
Family and child care	66.8	73.9	83.5	94.8	108.0
Learning disability	88.9	94.3	100.5	114.7	136.5

Note:
Most of the main programmes of care make use of services from the hospital, community and personal social services sectors. Expenditure figures for the hospital and community sectors quoted above can therefore overlap with those for individual programmes.

Child Protection

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress in developing an information-sharing protocol between child protection agencies and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [201096]

Angela Smith: A protocol between the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) and social services for the Joint Investigation of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Child Abuse already exists in Northern Ireland. Co-operating to Safeguard Children, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's guidance on child protection, provides advice on when and how the PSNI should work in partnership with social services regarding such allegations. Regional policies and procedures are also being developed by Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) to assist agencies and professionals working with sexually active young people. These procedures contain advice on when a referral to the PSNI and child protection agencies is necessary. A regional core group containing representatives from ACPCs, PSNI and NSPCC are currently considering how an information sharing protocol, involving child protection agencies, can be taken forward in Northern Ireland.

Children in Need

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Children in Need strategy will be published for consultation; what issues the strategy will address; and what funding will be made available for the strategy's implementation. [200515]

Angela Smith: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is currently developing a Strategy for Children and Young People in Need in Northern Ireland and is scheduled to consult with relevant stakeholders during 2005–06. The strategy will look at all issues that concern children in need; in particular, focus will be on child protection, adoption

and support. Funding levels will be determined following completion of the strategy, will be influenced by recommendations flowing from the strategy and will be determined in the context of overall priorities.

Commissioner for Children and Young People

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much will be spent per head of child population by the Children's Commissioner for Northern Ireland in 2005–06. [203269]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People has an annual budget of approximately £1.9 million. The estimated spend per head of child population in Northern Ireland in 2005–06 will be around £4.

Community Care Packages

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* residential, *(b)* nursing home and *(c)* domiciliary community care packages were provided in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [202607]

Angela Smith: The number of *(a)* residential, *(b)* nursing home and *(c)* domiciliary community care packages in effect in each of the last 10 years is detailed in the following table:

	(a) Residential	*(b) Nursing Home*	*(c) Domiciliary*	*Number of community care packages in effect*
2004	4,682	7,292	7,041	19,015
2003	4,511	7,382	7,110	19,003
2002	3,985	6,153	7,221	17,359
2001	3,877	5,882	6,828	16,587
2000	3,483	5,381	6,621	15,485
1999	3,344	5,106	6,306	14,756
1998	3,044	4,872	6,026	13,942
1997	2,603	4,307	6,581	13,491
1996	2,386	3,699	6,095	12,180
1995	1,699	2,822	4,864	9,385

Notes:
1. Figures show a snapshot at 31 March for each year, and refer to care managed packages.
2. Data for 2004 are provisional and may be subject to change.

Community-based Health Professionals

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of providing community-based health professionals in the Province with hand-held computers. [202045]

Angela Smith: The use of hand-held computers by community-based health and social care professionals has been identified as an essential element of the requirements for the Person-centred Community Information System (PCIS). Each of the 10 trusts planning to procure and implement PCIS has made significant provision in their local implementation planning for the introduction of hand held technology.

Trust management and professional staff have identified a number of significant benefits that should arise from the use of hand held technologies including; the ability to access high quality information where and when it is needed; more timely capture and sharing of information; and reduction in professionals' time spent travelling to their base to access or record data, leading to more time with patients/clients.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of administration in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in each of the last five years. [201935]

Angela Smith: The information requested is detailed as follows:

Core DHSSPS	*Amount (£ million)*
2000–01	28.5
2001–02	29.8
2002–03	32.6
2003–04	33.8
2004–05 (Estimate)	34.6

Digital Hearing Aids

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients were waiting for digital hearing aids in the Province *(a)* on 1 January and *(b)* at the latest available date. [202600]

Angela Smith: This information is not available centrally.

Disabled Children

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance his Department is providing to the families of children with disabilities. [201950]

Angela Smith: Health and Social Services Trusts provide a range of mainstream and specialist Health care services for children with disabilities and their families, including diagnostic and assessment services, family support services, respite services, day care services and befriending schemes. These services are met through the child health, child learning and physical/sensory disability programmes of care.

The Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 gives carers the right to an assessment of need and empowers trusts to supply services directly to carers to help them in their caring role.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce multidisciplinary inter-specialty combined screening for disabilities amongst children. [202591]

Angela Smith: A range of newborn screening programmes is already in operation. In addition, there are screening tests used when specific conditions are suspected. The Department has recently adopted the recommendation of the "Hall 4" Health for All Children Report on child health screening and surveillance, which was prepared by a multidisciplinary working group of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and which has been endorsed by the National Screening Committee.

Eating Disorders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what services there are in the Province for those with eating disorders. [202602]

Angela Smith: Health and social services trusts provide a range of services largely through generic mental health, primary care and acute services. For complex cases the option of extra contractual referral to services outside Northern Ireland is available.

A Regional Eating Disorders Working Group was established in June 2003 to take forward the recommendations of the Eating Disorders Consultation document. This work is being progressed through a number of subgroups and will lead to the establishment of a regional eating disorders service.

Emergency Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of providing *(a)* ambulance and *(b)* fire services in the Province was in each of the last five years. [201944]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Member to my answers of 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1352W and 1361W.

General Practitioners

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on plans for out-of-hours GP cover in the Kilkeel and Annalong areas from 1 January 2005. [202587]

Angela Smith: From 1 January 2005 statutory responsibility for the provision of general practitioner out-of-hours services will transfer to health and social services boards. The Southern Health and Social Services Board, in considering the provision of out-of-hours cover for the Kilkeel/Annalong area has sought to address access difficulty by investigating the provision of out-posted GP services, developing a nurse led minor injury unit in Kilkeel and making transport available to those without access to private transport.

The board has advised that prior to 6 December 2004, out-of-hours services in the Kilkeel/Annalong area, were provided by GPs who work in the area and residents did not have access to the out-of-hours centre which is situated in Newry. However, from 6 December the population of Kilkeel/Annalong has access to the full range of services provided by the out-of-hours centre.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of the superannuation contribution of staff employed in family doctor practices will be provided through the practice global sum under the new general practitioner contract. [202606]

Angela Smith: The global sum for practices in Northern Ireland includes an element to enable practices to cover the employer's superannuation contribution and that element was calculated on a contribution level of 5 per cent.

Health and Personal Social Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the expenditure per head of population in the Province on health and personal social services was in the last year for which figures are available. [201949]

Angela Smith: The public expenditure on all health and personal social services per head of population in the Province for the 2003–04 financial year was £1,706.

Health and Social Services

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to evaluate the role of local health and social services care groups, with particular reference to the participation of general practitioners. [203233]

Angela Smith: The Department has commissioned an evaluation of the development of Local Health and Social Care Groups. This should be completed early in 2005.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been spent on the creation of Local Health and Social Services Care Groups. [203239]

Angela Smith: The annual administrative costs of the 15 Local Health and Social Care Groups have been fixed at £3 per head of population covered since the Groups were established in June 2002. The annual cost to the Department is £5.3 million.

Health Expenditure

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* general practitioner consultations, *(b)* eye tests and *(c)* prescription items were provided in the province (i) in the last year for which figures are available and (ii) (A) five (B) 10 and (C) 15 years previously. [202054]

Angela Smith: The information as requested is as follows.

(a) General practitioner consultations

Financial year	*Number (thousand)*
2003–4	7,567
1998–99	6,514
1993–94	n/a[1]
1988–89	3,739

[1] Data not available from the archived database or for the years either side.

(b) Eye tests

Calendar year	*Number (thousand)*
2003	339
1998[1]	236
1993	169
1989[2]	115

[1] Refers to the 1998–99 financial year (April 1998 to March 1999).
[2] 1988 figures not available.

(c) Prescription items[1]

Calendar year	*Number (thousand)*
2003	26,399
1998	22,516
1993	18,660
1989[2]	15,628

[1] Excludes private prescriptions.
[2] 1988 figures not available.

Health Service Agency Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the level of expenditure in the Province on Health Service agency staff in each of the last five years. [202612]

Angela Smith: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Expenditure in Northern Ireland on Health and Social Services agency staff

	£000
1998–99	5,065
1999–2000	8,901
2000–01	13,357
2001–02	16,281
2002–03	22,119

Home Help Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals have received home help services in each of the last 10 years. [202608]

Angela Smith: The number of individuals in receipt of home help services in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table.

	Persons in receipt of home help
2004	26,408
2003	26,339
2002	26,948
2001	28,182
2000	27,844
1999	28,115
1998	28,016
1997	28,646
1996	30,347
1995	29,430

Note:
The figures refer to the position at 31 March each year. Figures for 2004 are provisional and may be subject to change. The data include persons in receipt of home care as well as home help, as the service provided by the Trusts normally includes both components. Persons who receive home help/home care as part of an intensive domiciliary care package are excluded from the figures. This information is published each year in Community Statistics, which is available in the Northern Ireland Assembly Library and also on the DHSSPS website.

Hospital-acquired Infection

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his latest estimate is of the cost in a year of hospital-acquired infections to the Province's health service. [201936]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure that MRSA is cited on death certificates for all deaths in which it has been a contributory factor. [201938]

Angela Smith: Guidelines on completing death certificates are included at the front of every book of death certificates, and no certificates are available without these instructions. Internationally accepted guidance from the World Health Organisation on the completion of death certificates requires only those conditions that contribute directly to death to be recorded. The recorded cause of death may be the underlying disease or injury with MRSA infection noted as a contributory factor.

The General Register Office classifies the cause of death and contributory factors using the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). ICD does not have a specific code for MRSA. The World Health Organisation recently recommended introducing codes for antibiotic resistance to the ICD from 2006. This should allow death caused by or contributed to by MRSA to be more easily identified.

Housing

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what account is taken of claims of intimidation in applications for social housing in Northern Ireland; what assessment has been made of *(a)* the level of applications which claim intimidation and *(b)* the time scale for applications which claim intimidation; and if he will make a statement. [203046]

Mr. Spellar: Where an allegation of intimidation due to sectarianism, paramilitarism or racism is confirmed and the applicant is considered eligible for housing and homelessness assistance, that person's name will be placed on the waiting list for re-housing with an additional 200 intimidation points. Upon being re-housed such applicants will be entitled to claim an intimidation grant of £692 to enable them to resettle in their new home. In the first six months (April to September) of the current financial year 556 applications for re-housing were made due to intimidation and of these 207 were accepted. Figures for the last two financial years show a decrease in such claims. The Housing Executive has set a performance target to fully assess 95 per cent. of all homelessness applications, (including those from applicants claiming intimidation), within 33 days. In the year to date 97 per cent. of all homelessness applications have been fully assessed within the target. The Housing Executive treats seriously all requests for housing assistance from those claiming to have been intimidated from their homes and investigates these before accepting the request.

Junior Doctors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of training junior doctors in the Province was in the last year for which figures are available. [201947]

Angela Smith: Junior doctors, by definition are doctors in training. Training of junior doctors takes place in a work-based environment and is an integral part of service delivery to patients. In addition to this form of training junior doctors also attend training courses and are entitled to claim study leave.

During the financial year 2003–04, the last year for which figures are available, the expenditure for study leave for junior doctors in training totalled £1,195,598.

Looked-after Children

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of looked after children in the Province are fostered. [202050]

Angela Smith: The latest available information indicates that 64.5 per cent. of looked after children are in foster care placements.

Meningitis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients in the Province have been diagnosed with meningitis in each month in each of the last five years. [202043]

Angela Smith: The number of patients in the Province diagnosed with meningitis in each month of the last five years is detailed in the following table:

Month and year	*Number of patients diagnosed with Meningitis (confirmed and probable cases)*
December 1999	24
January 2000	46
February 2000	12
March 2000	10
April 2000	22
May 2000	15
June 2000	9
July 2000	8
August 2000	17
September 2000	24
October 2000	10
November 2000	19
December 2000	16
January 2001	9
February 2001	11
March 2001	15
April 2001	16
May 2001	5
June 2001	17
July 2001	12
August 2001	6
September 2001	16
October 2001	10
November 2001	3
December 2001	11
January 2002	15
February 2002	17
March 2002	18
April 2002	13
May 2002	8
June 2002	7
July 2002	12
August 2002	8
September 2002	10
October 2002	7
November 2002	11
December 2002	10
January 2003	9
February 2003	14
March 2003	9
April 2003	14
May 2003	3
June 2003	12
July 2003	11
August 2003	10
September 2003	6
October 2003	5
November 2003	11
December 2003	12
January 2004	11
February 2004	3
March 2004	6
April 2004	10
May 2004	11
June 2004	9
July 2004	10
August 2004	4
September 2004	9
October 2004	10
November 2004	9

Notes:
Information is based on enhanced surveillance of meningococcal disease notifications supplemented by laboratory reports.
Approximately 65 per cent. of cases each year in NI are laboratory confirmed.
Data for July to November 2004 are provisional and may be subject to change.
Source:
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

Mental Health Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact of new Crisis Response and Assertive Outreach mental health services in the Province on the level of hospital admissions. [202601]

Angela Smith: In the Northern Board area, the Crisis Response and Assertive Outreach teams were established on 1 April 2003 and are the subject of a two-year evaluation. However, early figures show a 39 per cent. reduction in hospital admissions over a 12-month period. Crisis Response and Assertive Outreach services in other Board areas have not been developed to the same extent yet and although they would be expected to reduce pressures on acute psychiatric inpatient beds, it would not be feasible to carry out a comprehensive assessment of this until staff recruitment is completed and the services are more fully established.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the provision of beta interferon and glatiramer for multiple sclerosis in Northern Ireland. [202593]

Angela Smith: Disease modifying treatments for people with multiple sclerosis have been available in Northern Ireland since the mid-1990s. At 4 November 2004 there were 540 people with multiple sclerosis receiving disease modifying treatments such as beta interferon or glatiramer, with a further 20 people suspended from treatment. There were 65 people on the waiting list for treatment.

My Department remains committed to improving access to specialist drugs, including beta interferon and glatiramer, which offer the potential for significant improvement in patient care. Substantial additional funding has been made available to Health and Social Services Boards for a wide range of specialist medicines

and the infrastructure to support their provision. This year, Health and Social Services Boards will spend an estimated £4.5 million providing specialist drugs to MS sufferers.

Necrotising Fasciitis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of necrotising fasciitis there were in each of the last five years; and what steps he has taken to limit the number of cases of necrotising fasciitis in the Province. [202583]

Angela Smith: The number of cases of necrotising fasciitis is not collected centrally.

Trusts have infection control measures in place that help to limit the number of cases. These include the use of isolation wards, treatment for the close family of patients, tissue viability nurses who specialise in improving wound management, and the implementation of CREST guidelines on wound management.

Further CREST guidelines on the management of cellulitis, which will address necrotising fasciitis in more detail, are currently being developed.

NHS (Treatment Eligibility)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what checks on citizenship and permanent residence are carried out by the national health service in Northern Ireland on patients presenting for medical treatment; and if he will make a statement. [200727]

Angela Smith: All persons presenting to a GP practice for emergency or immediately necessary medical treatment are entitled to receive such treatment free of charge, regardless of citizenship or length of residence. In relation to non-emergency medical treatment, or medical treatment that is not immediately necessary, a GP will have to be satisfied that the person can be considered as "ordinarily resident" in Northern Ireland before accepting the person onto the practice list for NHS treatment. If the GP is not sure of the residence status, the person is referred to the Central Services Agency for a decision on entitlement and the issue of a medical card.

Anyone who presents to a hospital accident and emergency department requiring emergency medical treatment will receive appropriate, hospital, specialist and ancillary services will be provided to all regardless of citizenship or length of residence. For any person not ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland who becomes ill when in Northern Ireland, services will be made available to the extent deemed necessary by the medical practitioner concerned with the treatment of that person to enable them to return to their country of residence.

NHS Dentistry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many whole-time equivalent dentists are employed within the NHS in the Province; and how many there were *(a)* five, *(b)* 10 and *(c)* 15 years ago. [202055]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

Dentists[1] 1994 to 2004[2]

	Headcount[3]
2004	894
1999	794
1994	718

[1] Figures exclude Dental Assistants and any wholly private Dental Practitioners.

[2] Figures include hospital and community based dentists.

[3] Figures are not available for 1989.

Note:

Whole-time Equivalent figures are not available.

Prescriptions

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance is being provided to elderly patients who no longer have their medications prescribed on a weekly basis; and if he will estimate the annual savings in the Province that will result from the recent policy to limit weekly prescribing of medications to patients. [202613]

Angela Smith: No action has been taken to limit weekly prescribing of medications to patients. That remains a clinical decision for the GP (or other qualified prescriber) based upon the patient's condition.

Action was however taken recently to clarify the rules in the NI Drug Tariff with effect from 1 October 2004 under which it is appropriate for pharmacists to be paid Multiple Dispensing fees. This clarification was not aimed at making financial savings, but rather concerned with preventing inappropriate claims for Multiple Dispensing fees.

Priorities for Action

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the needs of families of children with disabilities are addressed in Priorities for Action 2005–06. [201940]

Angela Smith: Priorities for Action 2005–06 is currently under development. Its precise content will be decided in light of the Budget settlement, later this month. I expect to publish the document early in the new year.

Priority Treatment (Ex-service Personnel)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 24W, on priority treatment (ex-service personnel), if he will authorise boards and trusts in the Province to provide the same hospital treatment for ex-servicemen and women as has been available in England, Wales and Scotland since 1972. [202722]

Angela Smith: There are no plans at present to change the current arrangements whereby war pensioners access hospital services in Northern Ireland. I will be meeting with members of the Northern Ireland Veterans

Association later this month to discuss the needs of ex-service personnel in Northern Ireland. This meeting will cover a range of issues and careful consideration will be given to any points raised by the association.

Psychiatry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province are waiting for assessment by child and adolescent psychiatry services. [203094]

Angela Smith: The most recent published waiting list data available shows the position at 30 September 2004, when 1,184 individuals in Northern Ireland were awaiting a first out-patient appointment in the child and adolescent psychiatry specialty.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will assess the merits of re-structuring child and adolescent psychiatry services on a Province-wide basis. [203095]

Angela Smith: Policy and services for child and adolescent psychiatry services are currently being examined under the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (N.I.). The Review will recommend how future service delivery should be managed and funded.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many in-patients are in the new Regional Adolescent Psychiatry Unit; and on what date the most recent patient was admitted. [201928]

Angela Smith: There are currently seven patients in the Regional Adolescent Psychiatry Unit. The last patient was admitted on 9 August 2004.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Regional In-patient Adolescent Psychiatry Unit remains closed to admissions. [201929]

Angela Smith: As a result of current difficulties due to a shortage of clinical cover, the Regional In-patient Adolescent Psychiatry Unit remains closed to admissions. Boards and trusts are making every effort to care for existing in-patients and to re-open the unit for new admissions as soon as possible.

Toxin Pollution (River Strule)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the toxin responsible for the major fish kill on the River Strule, West Tyrone, discovered on 5 August, has been identified; what action has been taken to identify those responsible for the introduction of this toxin; what action has been taken to ensure the river is fully restocked after this incident; and what action is being taken to secure the future environmental integrity of the river system. [202243]

Angela Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) and the Loughs Agency (LA) investigated a fish kill in the River Strule which was reported on 5 August 2004. Preliminary investigations indicate that Omagh Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) was a significant factor in creating the conditions which caused a fish kill.

Discussions involving officials from EHS, LA and Water Service in relation to the events of August 2004 have taken place and, not withstanding the final conclusions of the investigations into the causes of the fish kill, measures have been agreed to provide both an early warning of potential future problems on this stretch of the river and the means to prevent such events resulting in further fish kills.

In addition, the Water Service is spending £7.5 million on the provision of a new WWTW for Omagh, which is designed to meet EHS and EU standards to protect the Strule, and which is planned for completion by October 2005.

The Loughs Agency has responsibility to conserve and protect salmon stocks and inland fisheries of the Foyle region, and it is seeking compensation to undertake river improvement work to enhance the native salmon population. Salmon ova of the genetic type suitable for restocking the River Strule are not available, however the angling season on the river and its tributaries was closed on 13 September—some 38 days early—to protect the remaining adult salmon stock in the river, thereby maximising the natural ova deposition in the area affected.

The Loughs Agency, EHS and Water Service have undertaken to meet representatives of the local angling community before Christmas to discuss the investigation of the incident and the way forward.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many incidents of pollution in the River Strule, West Tyrone, have been recorded in the last six years; whether those responsible for polluting the river on each occasion have been identified; and what action was taken against them in each case. [202244]

Angela Smith: From 1998 to 2003 there have been 242 substantiated incidents of water pollution in the River Strule. (The figures for 2004 have not yet been collated.) The records of the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) indicate that 38 per cent. of the incidents were attributed to the Water Service, 21 per cent. to Farms and 21 per cent. to Industry; however 204 of the pollution incidents were assessed as having low impact on the river and only four incidents were judged to be of high impact.

A range of enforcement tools is available to EHS regulatory staff, including warning letters, enforcement and prohibition notices, and prosecution. During this period, EHS has taken enforcement action in relation to 14 of the pollution incidents which have affected the River Strule, ie, nine warning letters have been issued and five prosecutions have been taken under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. Fines imposed by the courts have ranged from £300 to £3,000.

Water Service has Crown Immunity, and as such cannot be prosecuted under the Water Order. However, all incidents of pollution where Water Service have been identified as the polluter are passed to Water Service for remedial action, and the discharges from their WWTWs are subject to regulatory standards .

Wounds

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his latest estimate is of the cost incurred in a year in the Province from dressing wounds. [202065]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available centrally.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Violence and Disorder

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in tackling alcohol-related violence and disorder. [201522]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England was published on 15 March 2004 and contains a number of recommendations for, among other things, tackling alcohol-related crime and disorder. In implementing one of the Strategy's key recommendations, the Home Office's Police Standards Unit and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) led an Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC) over the summer from 8 July to 31 August.

92 Basic Command Units representing 39 police forces in England and Wales and 46 Trading Standards departments participated in the campaign. Results from the campaign show that over 30,000 visits to licensed premises were conducted leading to over 1,200 offences being detected. Around 1,800 Test Purchase operations were conducted with over a third resulting in an offence being committed. Over 4,000 fixed penalty notices were issued and over 9,500 alcoholic containers were confiscated with more than one-third of these being confiscated from children.

Prior to the start of the AMEC, the Home Office published "Violent Crime—Tackling Violent Crime in the Night-Time Economy—Guidelines and Tactical Options". The document set out a selection of successful initiatives that were readily transferable to police forces, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and local partners in helping to tackle alcohol-related violence and disorder.

Following the campaign, a "Lessons Learned" document was published and launched at a joint Home Office and ACPO conference on 8 November. The document is intended to assist those who are responsible for the continued drive to tackle alcohol misuse and its associated harms in relation to crime and disorder. A second campaign will take place over the Christmas period from 17 December to 3 January 2005.

The Government and the police are building on existing good crime-cutting work and developing best practice in the local areas and CDRPs that still have a high volume of violent crime. This strategy will develop further the work begun by the Government and police over the summer to tackle alcohol-related disorder.

In addition, the Government have introduced new fixed penalty notice offences for selling alcohol to a person under 18, the purchase of alcohol for a person under 18 on licensed premises, consumption of alcohol by a person under 18, and allowing delivery of alcohol to a person under 18. These offences came into effect on 1 November. Local authorities have also introduced around 120 Designated Public Places Orders to help tackle anti-social drinking.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the evidential basis was for point one of the Home Office response to 12 questions raised by Dan Lyons, Uncaged Campaigns, about Imutran xenotransplantation research licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. [199910]

Caroline Flint: The information relating to the deaths of animals used in moderate procedures in the Imutran xenotransplantation research licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 was drawn from progress reports provided by Imutran Limited and other documents examined during the course of the Home Office Chief Inspector's review of compliance with the project licence authorities granted to Imutran Limited staff for the research.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether lethal endpoints were expected in *(a)* project licence authorities and *(b)* other communications between his Department, the Animal Procedures Committee and Imutran xenotransplantation procedures with a moderate severity limit. [199911]

Caroline Flint: The possibility that animals would die in the course of the Imutran xenotransplantation studies licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 was considered and humane endpoints were set to require action to be taken before any such deaths, and to minimise any suffering caused. Permission was neither sought by Imutran Limited, nor granted, for procedures requiring death as the endpoint, other than as the result of humane killing.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what infringement action has been taken under section 6(6) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 against *(a)* named day-to-day care persons and *(b)* named veterinary surgeons employed by Huntingdon Life Sciences, in respect of failures to make arrangements for the care or destruction of primates in Imutran xenotransplantation procedures where breaches of the moderate severity limit occurred as identified at paragraph 5.14 of the Chief Inspector's compliance review. [199985]

Caroline Flint: None. The infringement described in paragraph 5.14 of the then Chief Inspector's review of compliance with the project licence authorities granted to Imutran Limited staff for its xenotransplantation research related to a delay in implementing the agreed humane endpoint for a procedure applied to protected animals. Responsibility for this was considered to rest with the project license holder and with the personal licensees, who were also clinicians. In mitigation, the

licensees' decisions were based upon clinical judgment, rather than undisputed or unambiguous facts and the Chief Inspector's view was that they did not indicate any fundamental disregard for the welfare of the animals. The infringement was dealt with by means of letters of admonishment to those responsible.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the unpublished documents on which he based his assessment that moderate severity limits had not been broken during xenotransplantation research by Imutran; and if he will make a statement. [200024]

Caroline Flint: A wide range of material was considered during the review carried out by the then Chief Inspector of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate in assessing compliance with the severity limits of the Imutran xenotransplantation research licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. This included the relevant project licence and personal licence files, Animal Procedures Committee papers, correspondence with and reports supplied by Imutran Limited, correspondence between the Home Office and others, Imutran study documents, internal memoranda and reports, draft and final reports and other documents maintained at the designated place at which the studies were carried out, laboratory results, records maintained by the veterinary surgeons and animal care staff, operational notes and clinical records maintained by personal and project licence holders, and other papers prepared or kept by Imutran staff. Many of the documents and records were examined at the designated place or Imutran Limited premises and copies have not beenretained by the Home Office. As far as we are aware only part of the material has been published. A detailed list of unpublished documents held by the Home Office is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the species was of each primate in procedures of moderate severity as part of the Imutran xenotransplantation programme found dead *(a)* in the peri- and post- surgical period, *(b)* having suffered significant clinical findings and *(c)* at (i) five, (ii) seven and (iii) 22 days; and if he will make a statement. [200025]

Caroline Flint: All of the animals were cynomolgous macaques.

Anti-social Behaviour Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crack houses have been closed under the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, broken down by local authority. [201433]

Ms Blears: Data is not readily available by local authority. Closure orders by Government Office region for the period 20 January to end September 2004 are as follows.

Region	*Closure orders*
East of England	5
South east	23
South west	24
East Midlands	10
West Midlands	3
North west	13
North east	7
Yorkshire and Humber	4
Wales	5
London	64
Total	158

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been imposed in *(a)* the Greater London area and *(b)* the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last two years. [200942]

Ms Blears: The available information, up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), is given in the table.

The number of ASBOs issued in Greater London, at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, by area, in which restrictions are imposed, and period.

Area	*1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003*	*1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004*[1]	*Total*
Greater London	38	183	221
of which			
Wandsworth London borough	—	8	8

[1] Latest available

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders were *(a)* accepted and *(b)* rejected by each court area in each year since their introduction. [199557]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in tables A and B.

Table A: The number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004 (latest available)—England and Wales

Type of court/area	*From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000*[1]	*From 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2000*	*From 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001*	*From 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002*[2]	
				On application	*On conviction*
Magistrates court committee / MCC / police force area					
Avon and Somerset	9	3	15	7	—
Bedfordshire	0	0	4	4	—
Cambridgeshire	5	1	2	2	—
Cheshire	0	0	2	13	—
Cleveland	1	4	4	5	—
Cumbria	1	1	1	13	—
Derbyshire	3	7	6	2	—
Devon and Cornwall	1	0	10	1	—

Table A: The number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004 (latest available)—England and Wales

Type of court/area	From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000[1]	From 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2000	From 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001	From 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002[2]	
				On application	On conviction
Dorset	0	2	2	0	—
Durham	0	4	9	8	—
Essex	0	0	0	2	—
Gloucestershire	0	2	2	1	—
GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[3]	9	19	13	19	—
Greater Manchester	10	2	24	77	1
Hampshire	1	2	4	9	—
Hertfordshire	1	1	9	6	—
Humberside	0	9	4	4	—
Kent	0	3	17	16	—
Lancashire	5	5	8	13	—
Leicestershire	1	4	0	1	—
Lincolnshire	0	0	2	1	—
Merseyside	8	3	7	22	—
Norfolk	6	0	12	7	—
Northamptonshire	0	2	6	1	—
Northumbria	8	5	9	16	—
North Yorkshire	4	0	7	0	—
Nottinghamshire	1	4	11	1	—
South Yorkshire	3	1	7	16	—
Staffordshire	0	4	6	12	—
Suffolk	3	0	4	5	—
Surrey	0	2	2	2	—
Sussex	3	4	3	16	—
Thames Valley	1	1	7	6	—
Warwickshire	0	1	2	15	—
West Mercia	5	7	39	29	—
West Midlands	11	28	43	23	—
West Yorkshire	4	2	14	14	—
Wiltshire	0	0	0	1	—
England	104	133	317	390	1
Dyfed Powys	0	0	0	0	—
Gwent	0	0	2	2	—
North Wales	0	1	0	7	—
South Wales	0	1	3	3	—
Wales	0	2	5	12	0
Total E and W MCC/pfa	104	135	322	402	1
County Court Group					
Midland and Oxford Group 4	•	•	•	—	•
Midland Group 1	•	•	•	—	•
Northern Groups 1 and 2	•	•	•	—	•
North Eastern Groups 3 and 5	•	•	•	—	•
South East (London) Groups 1 and 2	•	•	•	—	•
South East (Prov.) Groups 1, 3, 4, 5	•	•	•	—	•
Wales and Chester Groups 2 and 3	•	•	•	—	•
Western Group 3	•	•	•	—	•
Total E and W County Court Group	•	•	•	—	•
Crown Court Circuit					
Midland	•	•	•	•	•
Northern	•	•	•	•	•
North Eastern	•	•	•	•	•
South Eastern London	•	•	•	•	•
South Eastern Provincial	•	•	•	•	•
Wales and Chester	•	•	•	•	•
Western	•	•	•	•	•
Total E and W Crown Court Circuits	•	•	•	•	•
Total all courts England and Wales	104	135	322	402	•

Type of court/area	From 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003		From 1 January 2004 to 30 June 2004		Total 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004
	On application	On conviction	On application	On conviction	
Magistrates court committee / MCC / police force area					
Avon and Somerset	2	15	3	19	73
Bedfordshire	5	8	1	3	25

Type of court/area	From 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003		From 1 January 2004 to 30 June 2004		Total 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004
	On application	On conviction	On application	On conviction	
Cambridgeshire	12	2	2	8	34
Cheshire	18	10	6	14	63
Cleveland	12	1	7	—	34
Cumbria	2	11	4	5	38
Derbyshire	2	2	2	8	32
Devon and Cornwall	3	4	—	10	29
Dorset	4	—	6	2	16
Durham	10	2	11	4	48
Essex	7	6	4	12	31
Gloucestershire	4	1	4	3	17
GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[3]	51	42	30	72	255
Greater Manchester	123	66	83	72	458
Hampshire	17	8	12	10	63
Hertfordshire	7	5	3	15	47
Humberside	4	2	6	7	36
Kent	7	8	4	10	65
Lancashire	18	20	20	18	107
Leicestershire	1	1	—	4	12
Lincolnshire	—	4	—	1	8
Merseyside	34	3	14	13	104
Norfolk	5	—	7	6	43
Northamptonshire	1	—	7	3	20
Northumbria	4	42	4	4	62
North Yorkshire	5	8	2	6	25
Nottinghamshire	8	6	4	16	51
South Yorkshire	19	9	12	10	77
Staffordshire	5	19	4	11	61
Suffolk	8	12	—	23	55
Surrey	3	1	13	1	24
Sussex	18	3	19	15	81
Thames Valley	6	5	9	11	46
Warwickshire	9	2	7	4	40
West Mercia	20	5	9	9	123
West Midlands	19	49	8	31	212
West Yorkshire	70	9	101	27	241
Wiltshire	3	2	1	3	10
England	546	356	429	490	2,766
Dyfed Powys	2	9	1	4	16
Gwent	2	3	5	2	16
North Wales	3	8	1	7	27
South Wales	14	15	2	11	49
Wales	21	35	9	24	108
Total E and W MCC/pfa	567	391	438	514	2,874
County Court Group					
Midland and Oxford Group 4	—	•	3	•	3
Midland Group 1	—	•	1	•	1
Northern Groups 1 and 2	2	•	2	•	4
North Eastern Groups 3 and 5	—	•	2	•	2
South East (London) Groups 1 and 2	1	•	1	•	2
South East (Prov.) Groups 1, 3, 4, 5	2	•	4	•	6
Wales and Chester Groups 2 and 3	1	•	2	•	3
Western Group 3	3	•	1	•	4
Total E and W County Court Group	9	•	16	•	25
Crown Court Circuit					
Midland	•	9	•	19	28
Northern	•	31	•	31	62
North Eastern	•	5	•	11	16
South Eastern London	•	0	•	8	8
South Eastern Provincial	•	10	•	9	19
Wales and Chester	•	1	•	4	5
Western	•	9	•	23	32
Total E and W Crown Court Circuits	•	65	•	105	170
Total all courts England and Wales	•	641	•	559	3,069

[1] From 1 April 1999 up to 31 May 2000 data were collected by police force area on aggregated numbers only.

[2] Following introduction of the Police Reform Act ASBOs are available to the courts following conviction of a criminal offence.

[3] Including City of London.

Table B: The number of applications for antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) refused at the magistrates court, as reported to the Home Office from 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004 (latest available)—England and Wales

MCC/police force area (pfa)	From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000[1]	From 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2000	From 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001
Cleveland	—	1	—
Cumbria	—	—	—
GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[2]	—	2	3
Greater Manchester	—	—	—
Hampshire	—	—	2
Kent	—	—	—
Lancashire	—	—	—
Merseyside	4	—	—
Norfolk	—	—	1
Suffolk	—	—	1
Sussex	—	1	—
Thames Valley	—	—	—
West Midlands	—	1	—
West Yorkshire	—	—	—
Wiltshire	—	—	4
Total England and Wales	4	5	11

MCC/police force area (pfa)	From 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002	From 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003	From 1 January 2004 to 31 June 2004	Total 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004
Cleveland	—	—	1	2
Cumbria	1	—	—	1
GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[2]	2	2	—	9
Greater Manchester	1	4	—	5
Hampshire	—	1	1	4
Kent	4	—	—	4
Lancashire	—	—	2	2
Merseyside	—	1	—	5
Norfolk	—	—	—	1
Suffolk	—	—	—	1
Sussex	—	—	—	1
Thames Valley	—	1	—	1
West Midlands	—	—	—	1
West Yorkshire	1	—	—	1
Wiltshire	—	—	—	4
Total England and Wales	9	9	4	42

[1] From 1 April 1999 up to 31 May 2000 data were collected by police force area on aggregated numbers only.
[2] Including City of London.
Note:
No notifications have been received of ASBOs refused at the county court.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been made by the courts in England and Wales in each year since December 1999, broken down by magistrates court area. [199992]

Ms Blears: Available information on the number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, by court area, is given in the table.

The number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004 (latest available).

England and Wales

Type of court/area	From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000[1]	From 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2000	From 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001	From 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002	From 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003	From 1 January 2004 to 30 June 2004	Total April 1999 to 30 June 2004
Magistrates Courts Committee/police force area							
Avon and Somerset	9	3	15	7	17	22	73
Bedfordshire	0	0	4	4	13	4	25
Cambridgeshire	5	1	2	2	14	10	34
Cheshire	0	0	2	13	28	20	63
Cleveland	1	4	4	5	13	7	34
Cumbria	1	1	1	13	13	9	38
Derbyshire	3	7	6	2	4	10	32
Devon and Cornwall	1	0	10	1	7	10	29
Dorset	0	2	2	0	4	8	16
Durham	0	4	9	8	12	15	48
Essex	0	0	0	2	13	16	31
Gloucestershire	0	2	2	1	5	7	17

The number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004 (latest available).

England and Wales

Type of court/area	*From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000*[1]	*From 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2000*	*From 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001*	*From 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002*	*From 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003*	*From 1 January 2004 to 30 June 2004*	*Total April 1999 to 30 June 2004*
GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[2]	9	19	13	19	93	102	255
Greater Manchester	10	2	24	78	189	155	458
Hampshire	1	2	4	9	25	22	63
Hertfordshire	1	1	9	6	12	18	47
Humberside	0	9	4	4	6	13	36
Kent	0	3	17	16	15	14	65
Lancashire	5	5	8	13	38	38	107
Leicestershire	1	4	0	1	2	4	12
Lincolnshire	0	0	2	1	4	1	8
Merseyside	8	3	7	22	37	27	104
Norfolk	6	0	12	7	5	13	43
Northamptonshire	0	2	6	1	1	10	20
Northumbria	8	5	9	16	16	8	62
North Yorkshire	4	0	7	0	6	8	25
Nottinghamshire	1	4	11	1	14	20	51
South Yorkshire	3	1	7	16	28	22	77
Staffordshire	0	4	6	12	24	15	61
Suffolk	3	0	4	5	20	23	55
Surrey	0	2	2	2	4	14	24
Sussex	3	4	3	16	21	34	81
Thames Valley	1	1	7	6	11	20	46
Warwickshire	0	1	2	15	11	11	40
West Mercia	5	7	39	29	25	18	123
West Midlands	11	28	43	23	68	39	212
West Yorkshire	4	2	14	14	79	128	241
Wiltshire	0	0	0	1	5	4	10
England	104	133	317	391	902	919	2,766
Dyfed Powys	0	0	0	0	11	5	16
Gwent	0	0	2	2	5	7	16
North Wales	0	1	0	7	11	8	27
South Wales	0	1	3	3	29	13	49
Wales	0	2	5	12	56	33	108
Total E and W magistrates courts	104	135	322	403	958	952	2,874
County court group							
Midland and Oxford Group 4	•	•	•	•	—	3	3
Midland Group 1	•	•	•	•	—	1	1
Northern Groups 1 and 2	•	•	•	•	2	2	4
North Eastern Groups 3 and 5	•	•	•	•	—	2	2
South East (London) Groups 1 and 2	•	•	•	•	1	1	2
South East (Prov) Groups 1,3,4,5	•	•	•	•	2	4	6
Wales and Chester Groups 2 and 3	•	•	•	•	1	2	3
Western Group 3	•	•	•	•	3	1	4
Total E and W county courts	•	•	•	•	9	16	25
Crown court circuit							
Midland	•	•	•	•	9	19	28
Northern	•	•	•	•	31	31	62
North Eastern	•	•	•	•	5	11	16
South Eastern London	•	•	•	•	0	8	8
South Eastern Provincial	•	•	•	•	10	9	19
Wales and Chester	•	•	•	•	1	4	5
Western	•	•	•	•	9	23	32
Total E and W Crown court	•	•	•	•	65	105	170
Total all courts England and Wales	104	135	322	403	1,032	1,073	3,069

[1] From 1 April 1999 up to 31 May 2000 data were collected by police force area on aggregated numbers only.
[2] Including City of London.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been made on *(a)* under-16 year olds, *(b)* 18 to 21 year olds and *(c)* those aged 21 years or over, broken down by sex, in each of the financial years since April 2000; and what percentage of those orders have been breached. [199994]

Ms Blears: Information is given in table A on the number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued, as reported to the Home Office, by age, sex and financial year.

The readily available information on ASBO breaches covers the period from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2002. This is given in table B. Data on breaches up to the end of 2003 will be available in the near future.

Table A: The number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders issued, as reported to the Home Office, by age, sex and period

England and Wales

	Age 10–15			Age 16–17			Age 18–20		
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
1 June 2000 to 31 March 2001	69	3	72	27	4	31	29	1	30
1 April to 31 Mar ch 2002	109	1	110	81	2	83	43	3	46
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	136	8	144	119	10	129	48	6	54
1 Apr il 2003 to 31 March 2004	270	26	296	289	23	312	200	16	216
Total	584	38	622	516	39	555	320	26	346

	Age 21 and over			Age not known			Total all ages and not known
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	
1 June 2000 to31 March 2001	45	15	60	15	5	20	213
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	46	26	72	9	1	10	321
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	112	39	151	10	7	17	495
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	397	117	514	2	3	5	1,343
Total	600	197	797	36	16	52	2,372

[1] Data for the period from 1 April to 31 May 2000 is not available by age or sex.

Table B: The number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders issued, as reported to the Home Office, by age and sex, in the period from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2002[1] and the number breached in the same period

England and Wales

	Age 10–15			Age 16–17			Age 18–20		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Persons
ABSOs issued	266	9	275	191	12	203	103	9	112
ASBO breached	103	3	106	72	5	77	34	6	40
Breach rate(per cent.)	39	33	39	38	42	38	33	67	36

	Age 21 and over			Age not known			
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Total all ages and not known
ASBOs issued	155	68	223	34	13	47	860
ASBOs breached	50	19	69	10	3	13	305
Breach rate (per cent)	32	28	31	29	23	28	35

Note:
Breaches are counted on a persons basis, i.e multiple breaches (occurring at the same time), or where the order has been breached on more than one occasion, are counted as one breach.

Community Safety (Funding)

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* national and *(b)* regional funding streams which (i) local authorities, (ii) town and parish councils and (iii) other local organisations with an interest in promoting community safety in Kent Thameside are eligible to apply to for assistance in funding (A) youth shelters, (B) sports systems and (C) other facilities and diversionary activities for young people. [199429]

Ms Blears: Home Office funding which promotes community safety is channelled through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), of which local authorities, town and parish councils and other organisations can be members. Community safety funding is drawn from the Building Safer Communities (BSC) and Basic Command Unit (BCU) funds. Both funds were introduced in 2003–04 to run for three years.

The Basic Command Unit fund is provided to the police and amounts to £150 million over three years. The Kent Thameside area falls within the North Kent Basic Command Unit, which received £180,598 this year from the BCU fund.

The Building Safer Communities fund is provided to CDRPs; totalling £72.3 million in 2003–04, and £74 million in 2004–05. The two CDRPs which comprise the Kent Thameside area, Dartford and Gravesham, received £163,437 and £164,635 respectively this year.

The main funding streams supported by other Government Departments which also assist with the activities described are the Department for Education and Skills' Children's Fund; the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund; the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's funds which are channelled through Sport England and its regional sports boards; and the cross departmental programme Positive Activities for Young People. In addition, the Big Lottery also provides funding through its Young People's Fund.

Community Safety Officers (West Midlands)

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the application from West Midlands police for funds for community safety officers (CSOs) for 2004–05 to 2006–07 included an indication of where CSOs would be deployed. [200316]

Ms Blears: Deployment of police officers and police staff, including community support officers (CSOs) is an operational matter for chief officers of police. The recent application on behalf of West Midlands Police Authority for funding for additional CSOs under the first round of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund, indicated that the additional CSOs would be deployed primarily in urban areas, within a neighbourhood policing team model.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 18 October (Ref: M15239/4). [200325]

Caroline Flint: I replied to the hon. Member on 30 November 2004.

Crime

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answers of 2 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 191–92W, on crime, if he will provide the figures for each year between 1997 and 2003–04. [199549]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the tables. Clear-up rates for all offences in the York CDRP are not available centrally.

Table 1: Clear-up rates for Yorkshire and the Humber—1997–98 to 2001–02

Percentage

Period	*Yorkshire and the Humber region*	*North Yorkshire*	*York CDRP*
1997–98	27	26	—
1998–99[1]	28	33	—
1999–2000	24	31	—
2000–01	24	30	—
2001–02	21	26	—

'—' Not available.

[1] Figures for offences cleared up are affected by changes to the detections counting rules in 1998–99.

Note:

The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Clear-up rates for Yorkshire and the Humber—2002–03 and 2003–04

Percentage

Period	*Yorkshire and the Humber region*	*North Yorkshire*	*York CDRP*
2002–03	21	26	—
2003–04	21	28	—

'—' Not available.

[1] The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 2 November, *Official Report*, columns 191–92W, on crime, how many *(a)* crimes, *(b)* burglaries, *(c)* thefts and *(d)* vehicle-related crimes were reported to the police (i) in Yorkshire and the Humber and (ii) in North Yorkshire in each year since 1999. [199550]

Ms Blears: The information requested is given in the tables.

Table 1, Recorded Offences in Yorkshire and the Humber and North Yorkshire—1999–2000 to 2001–02

Number of offences

Yorkshire and the Humber Period	*Recorded crimes*	*Burglaries*	*Thefts*[1]	*Vehicle crimes*
1999–2000	566,933	133,940	241,586	164,474
2000–01	545,950	125,786	229,444	157,144
2001–02	610,223	139,044	254,416	123,614
North Yorkshire				
1999–2000	53,554	10,402	24,326	13,315
2000–01	51,551	9,829	22,796	12,274
2001–02	59,149	11,658	25,191	8,176

[1] Excludes vehicle crime.

Note:

The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2, Recorded Offences in Yorkshire and the Humber and North Yorkshire—2002–03 and 2003–04

Number of offences

Yorkshire and the Humber Period	*Recorded crimes*	*Burglaries*	*Thefts*[1]	*Vehicle crimes*
2002–03	675,383	142,997	271,360	127,529
2003–04	680,467	121,175	258,505	115,899
North Yorkshire				
2002–03	67,798	11,595	28,590	9,642
2003–04	71,473	11,062	29,406	9,516

[1] Excludes vehicle crime.

Note.

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of crimes reported to the police in Pendle were cleared up in *(a)* 1996 and *(b)* the most recent year for which figures are available. [200970]

Ms Blears: Information on crimes cleared up in Pendle is not collected centrally. Pendle comes within the Pennine Basic Command Unit (BCU). Information at BCU level has only been collected from 1999–2000 onwards so figures for 1996 are not available centrally. The clear-up rate for 2003–04 in the Pennine BCU was 27 per cent.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* crimes, *(b)* burglaries, *(c)* thefts and *(d)* vehicle-related crimes were reported to the police in Pendle in (i) 1996 and (ii) the most recent year for which figures are available. [200971]

Ms Blears: Pendle is a Crime and Disorder Partnership (CDRP) area within the Lancashire police force area. Information at CDRP level has only been collected from 1999–2000 onwards so figures for 1996 are not available centrally.

The latest published information shows that there were 9,248 offences recorded in Pendle in 2003–04. Of these, 1,540 were burglaries and 3,015 were thefts. Of those thefts, 1,234 were thefts of or from a vehicle.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of domestic violence have been reported to the police in *(a)* Pendle and *(b)* Lancashire in each year since 2000. [200995]

Ms Blears: Domestic violence is not separately identified in the recorded crime statistics collected by the Home Office.

However, the British Crime Survey (BCS) routinely collects data on the prevalence and number of incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales from the main 'face-to-face' part of the survey.

The BCS is unable to provide information at either the police force area or the more local level requested. The available information is for the North West Region as follows:

BCS incident rates of domestic violence per 10,000 adults in the North West Region

2001–02	97
2002–03	93
2003–04	61

Crimes Against Young People

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of crime against young people have been recorded in each year since 1997, broken down by category of crime. [200336]

Ms Blears: The information is not available in the form requested. With the exception of certain offences where the age is specifically identified, the age of the victim is not collected in the recorded crime series.

Those offences in the series where a young person can be identified are:

Child destruction

Cruelty or neglect of children

Abandoning a child under the age of two years

Child abduction

Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13 or 16

Gross indecency with a child

Trends for these offences are published in Table 2.04 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin 'Crime in England and Wales 2003–04' HOSB 10/04. A copy of this publication is available in the Library and on the Home Office website.

Drivers (Mobile Phones)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set up a free phone number that members of the public can ring to give the car registration numbers of those drivers who break the law on using mobile phones while driving. [199408]

Caroline Flint: I have no plans to do so. It is however always open to anyone to assist and support the police by reporting any apparent criminal incident to them for such action as may be appropriate.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action the appropriate authorities should take when a member of the public makes a complaint against a driver who was using a mobile phone while driving. [199409]

Caroline Flint: The police will take such action as they deem appropriate in the light of the information provided.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what actions members of the public who see drivers using mobile phones while driving should take. [199414]

Caroline Flint: It is open to members of the public to report such incidents to the police together with any relevant details and supporting evidence they are able to supply.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200178]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Europe on Monday 29 November 2004, column 10W.

Fingerprinting

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will assess the impact of the Police Standards Unit's role in the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System programme. [199635]

Ms Blears: The Police Standards Unit (PSU) plays an important role in driving the effective use of National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS). The Home Office has invested approximately £150 million in the system and the PSU has a team working within the police service to ensure the best use is made of this investment. This includes making recommendations on the working practices of fingerprint officers using, to those on setting force policy for LiveScan, which scans and transmits fingerprints directly to the system. The PSU is working with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to implement these recommendations nationally.

The unit also has an important NAFIS performance-monitoring role that is essential to drive usage and challenge those that are not making enough use of it. Since 2003, when the reporting commenced, there has been an increase in identifications from recently arrested persons of nearly 80 per cent. The PSU reports progress on usage of the system to Ministers quarterly.

In addition, the PSU acts as a consultant to promote the use of NAFIS in individual forces and ensure that the efficiency benefits of the system are maximised.

NAFIS became fully operational nationally in 2001. The system provides more than 4,000 fingerprint identifications a month and it makes a significant contribution to the number of detections.

Firearms

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications there have been for *(a)* shotgun certificates and *(b)* firearms certificates in each of the last 10 years. [199573]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is given in the following table.

Table 1

Number (rounded)

	Applications for grant of new Shotgun Certificates			*Applications for renewal of Shotgun Certificates*			
	Applications[1]	*Granted*	*Refused*	*Applications*	*Granted*	*Refused*	*Shotgun certificates on issue at 31 December*[2]
1993	31,550	31,100	450	195,990	195,800	190	681,100
1994	32,640	32,200	440	201,540	201,400	140	670,000
1995	25,160	24,800	360	196,030	195,900	130	653,800
1996	26,300	25,800	500	193,330	193,100	230	638,000
1997	21,180	20,800	380	174,670	174,500	170	623,100
1998	17,280	16,900	380	6,660	[3]6,600	60	627,600
1999	16,040	15,600	440	2,510	[3]2,500	10	625,700
2000	18,550	18,200	350	141,580	141,300	280	602,500
2001	23,070	22,700	370	162,710	162,400	310	577,200
2002	25,950	25,600	350	153,000	152,700	300	559,000
2002–03	26,450	26,100	350	125,460	125,200	260	561,800

[1] Includes estimates made centrally for a small number of forces.
[2] Figures for 2002–03 are at 31 March 2003.
[3] The extension of the period for the certificates from three years to five years in 1995 meant that no renewals were due in 1998 and 1999. These are delayed applications from 1997.

Table 2

Number (rounded)

	Applications for grant of new Firearm Certificates			*Applications for renewal of Firearm Certificates*			
	Applications[1]	*Granted*	*Refused*	*Applications*	*Granted*	*Refused*	*Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December*[1]
1993	11,020	10,900	120	37,470	37,300	170	138,400
1994	11,820	11,700	120	38,030	37,900	130	140,200
1995	11,010	10,900	110	38,610	38,500	110	141,700
1996	10,360	10,200	160	38,220	38,100	120	141,900
1997	6,920	6,800	120	32,880	32,800	80	133,600
1998	6,040	5,900	110	1,610	[2]1,600	10	131,900
1999	5,090	5,000	90	253	[2]250	3	132,300
2000	5,980	5,900	80	26,290	26,200	90	125,400
2001	7,180	7,100	80	31,410	31,300	110	119,600
2002	8,680	8,600	80	28,890	28,800	90	117,700
2002–03	8,670	8,600	70	25,170	25,100	70	118,600

[1] Figures for 2002–03 are at March 2003.
[2] The extension of the period of the certificates from three years to five years in 1995 meant that no renewals were due in 1998 and 1999Those shown are delayed applications from 1997.

Fireworks Act

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance has been given to the police to ensure that the provisions in the Fireworks Act 2003 are enforced, with particular reference to people who set off fireworks after curfew hours. [200519]

Ms Blears: We have a comprehensive and robust package in place to tackle the misuse of fireworks. The Fireworks Regulations 2004 came into force in August and in October we extended the Penalty Notices for Disorder Scheme (PND) to include three new firework offences. Breach of the fireworks curfew is one of these new PND offences. The new PNDs allow police to punish offenders immediately by issuing on-the-spot fines and offer an additional disposal that has been widely welcomed by police forces across the country.

I was keen to ensure all relevant agencies were aware of the new arrangements. In early October I wrote to all chief constables to provide guidance ahead of the fireworks season and to ensure the new arrangements were made an integral part of their fireworks strategies. We have published a TOGETHER fact sheet on the misuse of fireworks and this has been widely distributed to practitioners. DTI are also in regular contact with individual police forces and other enforcement agencies, such as Trading Standards, to provide advice on the Fireworks Regulations 2004. They expect to publish comprehensive guidance shortly.

Early indications show that the new powers are being used effectively to tackle the misuse of fireworks

Road Traffic Offences

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the report of the review of road traffic offences undertaken by John Holliday will be published; and what factors determine the timing of its publication. [200985]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The review has largely been completed, but there are a number of very difficult issues under consideration

which require careful scrutiny before a consultation paper can be published. We intend to publish the consultation paper shortly.

Knives

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to *(a)* increase the penalties for carrying knives in public and *(b)* bring forward proposals for revising the sentencing guidelines to magistrates and judges in such cases; and if he will make a statement. [199909]

Caroline Flint: We are currently considering what more need be done to tackle knife-related crime. This includes reviewing the current legislation and penalties to deal with knives and other offensive weapons.

Metropolitan Police (Travel Allowances)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Metropolitan Police officers have been investigated since June 2001 for improper use of travel allowances; how many officers have been disciplined since June 2001 for improper use of travel allowances; and if he will make a statement. [201582]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police informs me that, since June 2001, two officers have been investigated for improper use of travel allowances. These two investigations did not result in formal disciplinary action being taken against the officers.

Police

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in Nottinghamshire in each of the last 20 years. [201089]

Ms Blears: The information requested is set out in the table.

Nottinghamshire police

As at 31 March:	*Number of police officers*
1984	2,229
1985	2,150
1986	2,210
1987	2,226
1988	2,252
1989	2,298
1990	2,316
1991	2,336
1992	2,331
1993	2,327
1994	2,328
1995	2,319
1996	2,318
1997	2,323
1998	2,323
1999	2,225
2000	2,204
2001	2,212
2002	2,330
2003	2,411
2004	2,484
2004 (31 August)	2,523

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dedicated traffic police officers there have been in each year since 2001–02, broken down by region; and what percentage of the total number of police officers these figures represent, broken down by region. [201194]

Ms Blears: Published information on police strength by police force area is available for rank, gender, ethnicity but not function. Published information on police strength by region is available for total strength. Figures on police strength for March 2004 were published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin 13/04, copies of which are available in the Library or on the internet site: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html.

Police Advice Bodies

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to ensure consistency between advice given to the Police by *(a)* the National Centre for Policing Excellence, *(b)* the National Policing Improvement Agency, *(c)* the Police Science and Technology Unit, *(d)* Police Powers and Leadership Unit and *(e)* Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. [201139]

Ms Blears: The various bodies concerned with delivering improved policing outcomes work together to ensure that consistent advice is provided to the police. The Police Leadership and Powers Unit (PLPU) works closely with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Consistency with the National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) is ensured by PLPU's role as the sponsor unit for CENTREX, the national police-training provider, of which the NCPE is a directorate.

The 'Improving Performance through Applied Knowledge' (IPAK) programme of work, led by the Police Standards Unit, is aimed at improving the development and dissemination of good practice in the policing community. This includes working approaches to avoid overlaps or gaps between the work of stakeholder organisations, including the NCPE, HMIC, and PLPU. In the field of science and technology, a consistent approach is co-ordinated through the Police Science and Technology Strategy Group, which is chaired by the Director of Policing Policy in the Home Office. This group includes the director of the NCPE, the heads of the Science Policy and the Information Communications Units, and a senior representative from HMIC. The Group will also include an appropriate representative from the National Policing Improvement Agency when the detailed composition and scope of the Agency has been agreed.

Finally, an important driver behind the Improvement Agency will be to rationalise the number of bodies that provide advice and assistance to the police service, thereby further ensuring consistency. The details of this are still being considered.

Police Authority Funding

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has

commissioned on whether the efficiency targets for police authorities of 3 per cent. from next year, including cashable savings of 1.5 per cent. are attainable. [199778]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The efficiency target for the police service was set in the Spending Review 2004 taking account of the Efficiency Review carried out by Sir Peter Gershon. It takes into account the police service's very good record of achievement of average efficiency gains of 2.6 per cent. per year from 1999–2000 to 2003–04.

The Home Office, the Association of Police Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers have worked together to develop an efficiency strategy for the service. They are committed to work in partnership to deliver cumulative year-on-year improvements in the value for money obtained from expenditure on the police service in pursuit of the very challenging targets set in SR 04.

An efficiency strategy implementation group is leading work to determine priorities for making efficiency gains, including in corporate service functions, such as human resource management and finance. A working group led by the Association of Police Authorities has already identified opportunities for substantial gains to be achieved through better procurement of goods and services.

A key element of the strategy is to increase the proportion of time which police officers spend on front-line policing. In 2003–04 the average proportion of officer time spent on front-line duties for all forces was 63.6 per cent.; the range between forces was from 53.8 per cent. to 70.2 per cent. Increasing the average to around 72.5 per cent. would deliver nearly half of the efficiency target.

Bureaucracy reduction, exploiting new technology, more effective deployment of officers and more effective use of support staff will all help to increase the amount of front-line policing. A recent report, commissioned by the Home Office from Accenture, indicates the potential to improve the efficiency with which officers are rostered for duty.

Police Detention Powers

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department has issued on the police exercise of stop and account not resulting in a search; and if he will make a statement. [200431]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Home Office issued the 'Recording of stops Implementation guide' to forces in March 2004. In July 2004, the Stop and Search Action Team (SSAT) issued interim guidance, as well as two further reports—'The views of the public on the phased implementation of recording police stops' and 'An evaluation of the phased implementation of the recording of police stops'. A guidance table on recording responsibilities was issued via the police reform bulletin on in November 2004.

Forces have been encouraged to feed back on this guidance to fully inform SSAT's work. A stop and search manual containing all available information from the SSAT workstreams will be issued to forces in 2005.

Police Numbers

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female police officers were serving in the London borough of Wandsworth on 1 November; and if he will make a statement. [199665]

Ms Blears: The latest available information on police service strength in police force basic command units was published online on 29 September 2004 along with Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 13/04. It showed that there were 612 full-time equivalent police officers in Wandsworth on 31 March 2004. Police officer strength for Basic Command Units is not available by gender.

Police Paperwork

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the evidence of the Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing, Community Safety and Counter-Terrorism to the Home Affairs Select Committee of 26 October, on what research his estimate of the number of items of police paperwork reduced since 1997 was based; and if he will make a statement. [200991]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The research was undertaken by North Yorkshire Police who contacted all forces to establish how many forms each had made redundant.

Police Training

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what competencies police recruits are trained at the police training college in Hendon. [200285]

Ms Blears: Police recruits at the Metropolitan police training centre, Hendon, are currently trained under the competency headings of community, operations, arrest, detention and prosecution, information technology and self development, relationships and safety. Attainment of the required standards is measured through knowledge tests and simulated exercises.

The Metropolitan Police Service is also one of the pilot forces for the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme. Under this programme, probationers will be assessed against 22 national occupational standards, and a full range of competencies.

Police (Lewisham)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were deployed in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2004. [201099]

Ms Blears: The Lewisham Deptford Parliamentary constituency is part of the Lewisham Borough Operational Command Unit (OCU). Information on strength at OCU level is collected annually and reflects the position at the end of March. Information on OCU strength is only available from 2002. The available information for the Lewisham OCU for March 2002 to March 2004 is set out in the table. It is not possible to provide police numbers at constituency level.

Lewisham Borough Operational Command Unit

As at 31 March:	*Number of Police Officers*
2002	595
2003	571
2004	625

The deployment of officers to OCUs is a matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Sir John Stevens QPM) and within the Lewisham Borough OCU deployment of officers is a matter for the Borough Commander. The OCU is additionally supported by centrally provided services from the Territorial Policing Pan London Units and by specialist investigation units.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress made in securing voluntary contributions towards the cost of policing disorder from the alcohol industry as set out in the Government's Alcohol Strategy. [201415]

Ms Blears: We are currently developing proposals on the most effective administration arrangements for the voluntary funds to tackle alcohol-related harms as recommended in the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England. We are developing these proposals in close consultation with the industry. We remain committed to making the voluntary approach work, but we will review the level of contribution and impact early in the next Parliament and consider further measures, including legislation, if necessary.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* non-uniformed prison staff were working in HM Prison Service on 1 November. [199559]

Paul Goggins: On 1 November there were *(a)* 24,376 prison officers, senior officers and principal officers and *(b)* 24,244 other prison staff working in HM Prison Service. These two figures represent the total staffing of the public sector Prison Service but include 7,371 operational support grades and 1,284 nurses who would, like officer grades, be expected to wear a uniform.

Non-uniformed staff carry out a range of functions, covering operational management, chaplaincy, psychology, industrial work, administration, catering and farms and gardens.

Figures are stated on a headcount basis.

Seizure of Property

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with reference to the seizure of servers belonging to Indymedia, what statutes govern the seizure of private property in the UK by foreign law enforcement agencies without authorisation from UK law enforcement agencies. [201718]

Caroline Flint: Foreign law enforcement agencies are permitted to seek the seizure of private property in the UK to secure evidence in connection with a criminal investigation, by sending a request to the UK Central Authority (UKCA) at the Home Office through mutual legal assistance procedures under the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003 and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The UKCA considers such requests in conjunction with the appropriate UK law enforcement agency. If the request is approved UKCA will then issue a direction to the courts on behalf of the Secretary of State authorising an application for a search warrant.

In this particular case, I understand that, in accordance with a US Commissioner's subpoena, a US based company accessed its servers in London from the US, in order to comply with the terms of that subpoena. No UK law enforcement agencies were involved in this action.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of sex offenders are participating in Home Detention Curfews. [199513]

Paul Goggins: There are currently no offenders on Home Detention Curfews (HDC) who are serving a sentence for a sexual offence. Prisoners subject to the registration requirements of Part 1 of the Sex Offenders Act 1997 (now replaced by Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003) are statutorily excluded from the scheme and all other prisoners convicted of a sexual offence are presumed unsuitable for release on HDC.

Special Constables

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what competencies special constables are trained; where the training takes place; and how long it lasts. [200284]

Ms Blears: Special constables are trained within their force. Forces are responsible for ensuring that their specials receive the necessary training to enable them to undertake their duties. Duration varies depending on the resources and organisation of individual training departments, but also reflecting the voluntary nature of the special constabulary, whose members often have full or part-time work commitments.

We have been working to produce a competency based role profile, training and appraisal packages, and a national vocational qualification through a Champions Initiative project in South Wales police(the "Specials Professional Development Scheme". South Wales police are currently trialling the training scheme.

Street Crime

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to collect data on the ethnicity of those who are *(a)* stopped and *(b)* arrested under joint multi-agency street crime operations. [201386]

Ms Blears: The police already collect data on the ethnicity of those searched or arrested for all offences, including under joint multi-agency street crime operations, and by April 2005 all forces will be required to record such data for stops as well.

Terrorism Act (Searches)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* vehicles and occupants were searched under section 44(1) and *(b)* pedestrians were searched under section 44(2) of the Terrorism Act 2000 in each police force area of England and Wales in 2003–04; and how many (i) arrests and (ii) prosecutions resulted. [199417]

Ms Blears: The statistics for 2003–04 are not yet available. They are due to be published in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin, in mid-December 2004. Statistics relating to race will be published in Home Office Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System in January 2005.

The statistics will show the number of stop-searches and the number of resulting arrests under both the Terrorism Act and other legislation. The statistics for charges and convictions are not cross-referenced with the searches and arrests in this way and could be collated and verified only at disproportionate cost.

Statistics on arrests, charges and convictions under the Terrorism Act 2000 are available on the Home Office website.

TETRA Airwave Project

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has carried out on the potential health risks related to the introduction of the TETRA Airwave project for police forces in England. [200965]

Caroline Flint: Following the publication of the Stewart Report "Mobile Phones and Health" in May 2000, we took expert advice from the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB)'s independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR) on the health and safety aspects of TETRA technology. The AGNIR experts suggested a number of areas where further research would be useful. These suggested have been taken forward as follows:

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is assessing the effects of TETRA on various types of cell. Dstl has concluded that TETRA has no effect on calcium exchanges in cells. Further work on epileptiform activity and cognitive performance is under way;

Imperial College is carrying out a long-term health monitoring study of police users of Airwave;

The Universities of Birmingham and Manchester are looking at patterns of use of Airwave among police users;

Microwave Consultants Ltd. (MCL) has been looking into Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) levels from TETRA equipment. MCL have found that SAR level from hand-held and hands-free equipment are within international safety limits. Work on SAR levels in vehicles is under way;

The NRPB has completed additional work on modelling SARs.

The Radiocommunications Agency (now part of Ofcom) checked emission levels from TETRA base stations.

In addition we are funding research on TETRA as an adjunct to the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research (MTHR) programme. Studies funded under this arrangement are selected and managed by the MTHR Programme Management Committee. These studies include the Burden Neurological Institute's examination of possible effects of microwave radiation on the electrical activity of the brain and the University of Bradford's study of possible non-linear and demodulation mechanisms in biological tissue.

These extensive studies have so far found no evidence of any particular risk to health from TETRA.

Further details of the Home Office's programme can be found at www.policereform.gov.uk/implementation/tetra/index.html and of the MTHR programme at: www.mthr.org.uk.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has conducted research into the potential health risks for users of the TETRA system. [199942]

Caroline Flint: We commissioned a number of research projects to study the health and safety effects of TETRA technology following the recommendations of the National Radiological Protection Board's independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation. No adverse effects have been identified to date.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces use the TETRA system. [199943]

Caroline Flint: Airwave, the new police radio system, is currently available to 42 police forces in England, Wales and Scotland. The number of users of Airwave continues to increase and at present the system has around 85,000 users.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding adverse health conditions consequent on use of the TETRA system. [199944]

Caroline Flint: The Police Federation has been, and continues to be, involved in the implementation of the Home Office's programme of research into the health and safety aspects of TETRA technology. Requests for further information from individual forces and federations have been dealt with as they arose.

Wildlife Crime

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers in each police authority area in England and Wales are assigned to tackling wildlife crime. [199988]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not available centrally. The latest information on police service strength for March 2004 was published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 13/04, "Police Service Strength England and Wales, 31 March 2004".

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 9 December 2004

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for how many deaths within the Greater London area alcohol was found to be a primary cause in each of the last five years. [203617]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 9 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for how many deaths within the Greater London area, alcohol was found to be a primary cause in each of the last five years. (203617)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. The attached table shows the numbers of deaths among residents of Greater London where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1999 to 2003.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] for Greater London,[2] 1999 to 2003[3]

Year	*Number of deaths*
1999	844
2000	827
2001	788
2002	817
2003	847

[1] For the years 1999–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed below:

291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol

For the years 2001–2003 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:

F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
I42.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol

The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:

Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. *Health Statistics Quarterly* 17, pp 5–14.

[2] Usual residents of the London Government Office Region.

[3] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Automated Telling Machines

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on the use of ATM machines. [203423]

Mr. Timms: Treasury Ministers regularly receive representations and discuss a wide variety of issues concerning the financial services industry.

Budget (Special Reserve Provision)

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his statement of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 650, if he will explain the difference between the figures given for the special reserve provision in that statement, in table C13 of the 2004 Budget (HC 701, 2003–04) and in table B18 of the pre-Budget report (CM 6408, 2004–05). [203655]

John Healey: The difference between the £0.3 billion special reserve in the 2004 Budget and the £0.7 billion published in the 2004 pre-Budget report comprises two elements: the increase in the special reserve announced in the pre-Budget report; and allocations made from it so far in 2004–05 related to the costs of the military conflict in Iraq and the Government's international obligations.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Todd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has reviewed the Gateway process following analysis of failures in the Child Support Agency system and process change programme; and if he will make a statement. [202902]

John Healey: There has been no re-examination of the OGC Gateway Review Process as a direct result of the Child Support Agency system and process change programme.

Commission for Africa

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what visits he has made to the African continent *(a)* as Chancellor of the Exchequer and *(b)* as part of his work as a member of the Commission for Africa; and what visits he plans to make to the African continent as part of his work as a member of the Commission for Africa. [199720]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The Chancellor, when he attended the Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting, visited South Africa in 1997, and meets regularly with his fellow Ministers engaged in the economic tranche of the Africa Commission's work, most recently in Ottawa in October and Berlin last month. The Chancellor is planning to visit Africa in January 2005 and this visit will include taking forward the work he is engaged in as a member of the Commission for Africa.

2005 will be a critical year for making progress on the UN's Millennium Development Goals. The Commission for Africa will take a fresh look at Africa's past and present, and the international community's role, in order to agree clear recommendations for the future.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what criteria are used by his Department to determine *(a)* on which satellite television stations advertisements on behalf of his Department or its agencies are screened and *(b)* the frequency of screenings of advertisements; [201313]

(2) how many television advertisements his Department has commissioned on *(a)* terrestrial and *(b)* satellite television channels in the last 12 months; and what the cost was in each case. [201314]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers given to the hon. Members for Wealden (Charles Hendry) and Rayleigh (Mr. Francois) on 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1262W. The position remains unchanged in the last 12 months.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202487]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury's aggregate costs for services from the top 10 accountancy firms were £741,000 in 2002–03 and £304,000 in 2003–04, excluding VAT. These include charges for consultancy and secondees.

EU Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much EU funding to date has not been signed off by the Court of Auditors; and what the UK's share of this funding is. [204073]

Mr. Timms: The European Court of Auditors has always given a positive Statement of Assurance for all revenue, all commitments and—within the payments budget—for administrative payments. The other payments which did not gain a positive Statement of Assurance make up around 95 per cent. of the payments budget, comprising mainly agriculture and structural fund payments. The exception to this was 2002, when pre-accession aid also gained a positive Statement of Assurance, reducing the proportion of the budget which did not to 91 per cent. The UK contributes to the whole EC budget and not to individual spending policies. Details of the UK's contribution can be found in the annual Statement on the EC Budget, the most recent of which was Cm 6134, published in April 2004.

Life Expectancy

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the life expectancy is of *(a)* men and *(b)* women living in the Greater London area; and if he will make a statement. [203630]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 9 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the life expectancy is of *(a)* men and *(b)* women living in the Greater London area. (203630)

The most recent available figures are for the three-year period, 2001–2003. Life expectancy at birth for residents of Greater London in that period was 76.0 years for males and 80.8 years for females.

Life expectancy at birth results for this and other Government Office Regions in England, for three-year moving averages from 1991–1993 to 2001–2003, have been published on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Productasp?vlnk=8841

Older Workers

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what plans he has to publish indicators of employment of workers aged 50 to 69 years; [203571]

(2) what plans he has to publish indicators of employment levels of all adults, including those over state pension age; [203572]

(3) what plans he has to publish indicators of employment levels of workers of all ages over 50 years; [203573]

(4) what plans he has to revise the term working age adult when describing adults aged below the state pension age. [203574]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Ms Vera Baird, dated 9 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about the publication of employment statistics by age. (203571, 203572, 203573 and 203574)

The Labour Market Statistics national and regional First Releases, published monthly by the Office for National Statistics, contain analyses of employment by age, based upon the Labour Force Survey. These include estimates for people of working age, currently 16 to 64 for men and 16 to 59 for women; those over retirement age, and those aged 50 to retirement age.

Estimates of employment for other age groups, for example 50 to 69, are available from publicly available data records, which can be used to produce tables such as that attached.

At present there are no plans to change the terminology used to describe employment statistics for persons below State Pension age.

Employment in the United Kingdom: three months ending August 2004

Not seasonally adjusted

Age group	*Thousand*
All aged 16 and over	28,159
All of working age[1]	27,164
50 and over	7,285
50 to 69	7,097

[1] Men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Right to Buy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a property purchased via right to buy is charged stamp duty on the selling price *(a)* net of discount and *(b)* before the discount is applied. [203551]

Mr. Timms: Stamp duty land tax, which replaced stamp duty on 1 December 2003 for land transaction, is charged on the selling price net of discount.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202248]

Travel Costs

Mr. Luff: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203782]

Mr. Timms: In respect of total travel costs and Ministers' travel costs, I refer to the answers given by the former Financial Secretary on 19 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 43–4W and 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 482–83W.

Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 the Chancellor of the Exchequer's and Chief Secretary's special advisers travelled abroad on official business on 12 occasions at an average cost of £3,793 per trip. The places visited were: USA on 11–14 April 2003, 20–24 July 2003; 15–18 September 2003 (X2), 28–30 August 2003; 4–6 February 2004; Paris on 16–18 May 2003; Dubai on 19–22 September 2003; South Africa on 4–7 October 2003; Mexico on 25–28 October 2003; Beijing on 21–24 February 2004; Germany on 3–4 March 2004.

Equivalent information about special advisers' domestic travel for this period, or about special advisers' total travel costs in the years prior to 2003–04, could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code", the "Civil Service Management Code" and the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Tax Credits

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people received the working tax credit and its predecessor tax credits in each year since 2001. [203591]

Dawn Primarolo: Child and working tax credit were introduced in April 2003. Estimates of the number of recipient families are available in the published quarterly and summary statistic.

Working families' and disabled person's tax credits were available from October 1999 to March 2003. Estimates of the number of recipient families appear in the published Quarterly Enquiries. These publications can be found on the Inland Revenue website, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

Children's tax credit was available in 2001–02 and 2002–03. An estimated 3.8 million families benefited in 2001–02. No estimate for 2002–03 is yet available.

WALES

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201348]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged. [201375]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office on Tuesday 8 December 2004 (Col 578W).

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203963]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Since then, Special Advisers have given no such instructions.

Travel Costs

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* Special Advisers and *(c)* Officials for each year since 1997. [203780]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden on 7 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 196W and the hon. Member for Twickenham on 11 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 257W.

Special Adviser travels costs for the Wales Office are not recorded separately from those of Ministers and Officials.

All ministerial official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code, copies of which are available in the parliamentary Libraries.

All official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules contained in the Civil Service Management Code.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Director of Public Prosecutions

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Solicitor General what the average length of time between the date of report of crime and submission of final police report to the Director of Public Prosecutions was in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what the average length of time taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions to deal with cases from first report to laying of formal charges was in each of the last five years *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by (i) Crown court cases and (ii) Petty Sessions cases. [202761]

The Solicitor-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland keeps records of the period from receipt of the police file to issue of direction. The average time taken is shown in the following table but excludes time spent on interim direction (time taken by the police to provide further necessary information sought by the Director):

Average Days

Direction type	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05 to 30 September 2004*
Indictable prosecution	100.5	117.9	98.8
Summary prosecution	51.3	60.6	47.2
All prosecution directions	65.5	75.7	64.1

Figures are not available for the full five-year period requested because of a change in recording practice in 2001. The figures for 2004–05 are provisional.

The Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland is currently running two Public Prosecution Service Pilot Schemes. The figures for the two pilots are not included in the table as they are compiled differently.

Average days

Direction type	*Belfast PPS Pilot*	*Fermanagh and Tyrone PPS Pilot*
Indictable prosecution	86.6	98.3
Summary prosecution	21.5	37.8
All prosecution decisions	27.3	39.7

The figures for the Pilots include time spent on interim directions. All figures in this table are provisional.

The Belfast PPS Pilot Scheme commenced 1 December 2003 and covers all offences committed in South Belfast PSNI District Command Unit and all youth offences committed in the Greater Belfast area.

The Fermanagh and Tyrone PPS Pilot Scheme commenced 1 April 2004 and covers all offences committed in Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Omagh and Strabane District Command Units.

All figures shown relate solely to files received from PSNI.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Age Discrimination

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Department plans to take to tackle age discrimination to provide older people with the same job opportunities as younger people. [202994]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are committed to tackling age discrimination in employment and extending opportunities for older workers. Legislation will come into force to outlaw unfair discrimination on the grounds of age in employment and vocational training in 2006. We are currently developing proposals for draft legislation. This will cover both direct and indirect discrimination and will apply to all those in or seeking employment or vocational training and not just those aged 50 and over.

In the meantime, our Age Positive campaign is combating age discrimination in the workplace. Age Positive is vigorously promoting the business benefits of an age diverse workforce by encouraging employers in both the public and private sector to adopt the good employment practices promoted through "Age Diversity at Work, A Practical Guide for Business." Age Positive Scotland and Age Positive Cymru are specifically engaging with employers in those countries.

The Age Positive campaign is promoted to employers and individuals through advertising, the website and press features in national, local and specialist publications. It features existing good practice by employer champions, research, and strongly promotes to employers at exhibitions and workshops. Age Positive awards help to widely publicise the achievements of businesses and individuals who overcome ageism in employment.

Budget 2004 announced a new high profile national guidance campaign to raise employers' awareness of, and ability to adopt, flexible employment and retirement opportunities in order to increase the recruitment, retention and training of older workers.

The results from projects in England, Scotland and Wales to encourage small and medium sized employers to adopt age positive employment practices will ensure that the national guidance campaign meets the specific needs of small and medium size employers.

Between 2004 and 2006 we are running pilot studies to trial mandatory participation in the New Deal 25 plus Intensive Activity Period for people aged 50 to 59 who have been claiming jobseekers allowance for 18 months. Long-term unemployed jobseekers aged 25 to 49 are already required to participate in this element of the programme which offers extensive help back into work.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202440]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions, aims to reply to all correspondence within 20 working days of receipt.

Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament and Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library.

Carer's Allowance

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of those qualifying for the state pension have been refused carers allowance, broken down by reason for refusal, in each of the last three years. [202269]

Maria Eagle: The question cannot be answered directly because the reason why people are refused carer's allowance is not broken down by age. Such information that is available is in the following table.

Carer's Allowance: Claims made by people of state pension age in each year 2001–02 to 2003–04

	Number of claims allowed and being paid CA[1]	*Number of claims allowed, but not paid as the claimant receives a state pension*	*Number of claims allowed as a percentage of the number of people receiving state pension*[2]	*Number of claims allowed, but not paid as the claimant receives a state pension as a percentage of the number of people receiving state pension*[2]
2001–02[3]	18,735	27,070	0.17	0.24
2002–03[4]	20,770	78,745	0.18	0.70
2003–04[5]	23,485	179,585	0.21	1.58

[1] CA is paid to people of State Pension age where there is no entitlement to State Pension or where State Pension is paid at a lower rate than CA. If a low State Pension is paid, a reduced rate of CA will be paid as a top-up.
[2] Figures for State Pension as at 31 March in 2002, 2003, 2004.
[3] Figures are as at 30 June 2002.
[4] Figures are as at 31 May 2003.
[5] Figures are as at 3 May 2004.

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. From October 2002, the upper age limit was increased to allow over 65's to claim.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Tom Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications for disability living allowance in 2003–04 taken to appeal were *(a)* refused on appeal and *(b)* granted on appeal; and how many in each category cited myalgic encephalomyelitis, or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis, as the principal disabling condition. [202820]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member. Christina Townsend, Chief Executive 5th Floor

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Tom Harris, dated 9 December 2004:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question regarding how many applications for disability living allowance in 2003 2004 taken to appeal were *(a)* refused on appeal and *(b)* granted on appeal; and how many in each category cited myalgic encephalomyelitis or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis as the principal disabling condition.

The information requested is not available in the required format as appeals are recorded by benefit type and not by condition. However, Disability and Carers Service, the agency responsible for decision-making on disability living allowance claims, do record claims by condition. The category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis is recorded as chronic fatigue syndrome. The information in table 1 gives details of all claims for disability living allowance and claims citing chronic fatigue syndrome as the principal disabling condition. Table 2 shows the number of disability living allowance appeals received and the outcomes.

Table 1: All disability living allowance and chronic fatigue syndrome recipients as at 29 February 2004

	Claims (Thousand)
All Disability Living Allowance	2,579.2
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	14.5

Notes:
1. Cases where payment of benefit has been suspended are excluded.
2. Figures taken from a 5 per cent. sample at 29 February 2004.
3. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

Information relating to myalgic encephalomyelitis is not available within the DLA data available from the Appeals Service databases.

Table 2: DLA Appeals received at the Appeals Service and decisions at hearing for the financial year April 2003 to March 2004.

	Agency
Lodged	89,020
Received	84,115
Cleared at hearing	71,795
Cleared in favour	37,225
Cleared against	95
Cleared upheld	33,580
Cleared others	895

Notes:
1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
2. Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
4. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Lodged—Number of Lodgements received at the First Tier Agency
Received—Number of Receipts at the Appeals Service
Cleared at Hearing—All Appeals cleared at hearing.
Cleared in Favour—All decisions found in favour of the appellant
Cleared Against—All decisions against the appellant
Cleared Upheld—The original decision remains
Cleared Others—Other decisions such as Strike outs, Revised periods.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

Mr. Tom Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many refusals of disability living allowance in 2003–04 on review were *(a)* taken to appeal and *(b)* taken no further; and how many in each category cited myalgic encephalomyelitis,

or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis, as the principal disabling condition. [202821]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Tom Harris, dated 9 December 2004:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question regarding how many refusals of disability living allowance in 2003/2004 on review were *(a)* taken to appeal and *(b)* taken no further; and how many in each category cited myalgic encephalomyelitis or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis as the principal disabling condition.

The information requested is not available in the required format as appeals and reviews are recorded by benefit type and not by condition. However, Disability and Carers Service, the agency responsible for decision-making on disability living allowance claims, do record claims by condition. The category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis is recorded as chronic fatigue syndrome. The information in table 1 gives details of all claims for disability living allowance and claims citing chronic fatigue syndrome as the principal disabling condition. Table 2 details the number of disability living allowance reviews registered and the outcomes. Table 3 shows the number of disability living allowance appeals received together with the outcomes.

Table 1: All disability living allowance and chronic fatigue syndrome recipients as at 29 February 2004

	Claims (thousand)
All Disability Living Allowance	2,579.2
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	14.5

Notes:
1. Cases where payment of benefit has been suspended are excluded.
2. Figures taken from a 5 per cent. sample at 29 February 2004
3. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.
Information relating to myalgic encephalomyelitis is not available within the DLA data available from the Appeals Service databases.

Table 2: disability living allowance reviews registered, allowed and disallowed for the financial year 2003–04

	DLA Reviews
Registered	255,715
Disallowed	4,435
Successful	116,075

Note:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
Source:
MIS Computer System, 100 per cent. data.

Table 3: DLA Appeals received at the Appeals Service and decisions at hearing for the financial year April 2003 to March 2004

	Agency
Lodged	89,020
Received	84,115
Cleared at Hearing	71,795
Cleared in Favour	37,225
Cleared against	95
Cleared upheld	33,580
Cleared others	895

Notes:
1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
2. Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
4. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
Lodged—Number of Lodgements received at the First Tier Agency.
Received—Number of Receipts at the Appeals Service.
Cleared at Hearing—All Appeals cleared at hearing.
Cleared in Favour—All decisions found in favour of the appellant.
Cleared Against—All decisions against the appellant.
Cleared Upheld—The original decision remains.
Cleared Others—Other decisions such as Strike outs, Revised periods.
Source:
1 AD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

I hope this reply is helpful.

Mr. Tom Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many of those cases taken to review for disability living allowance in 2003–04 *(a)* were refused on review and *(b)* were granted on review; and how many in each category cited myalgic encephalomyelitis or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis as the principal disabling condition; [202822]

(2) how many of those cases refused disability living allowance on application in 2003–04 *(a)* were taken to review, *(b)* were taken to appeal without prior review and *(c)* were taken no further; and how many in each category cited myalgic encephalomyelitis or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis as the principal disabling condition; [202823]

(3) how many claims were lodged for disability living allowance in 2003–04; and how many cited myalgic encephalomyelitis or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis as the principal disabling condition; [202824]

(4) how many of the total claims lodged for disability living allowance in 2003–04 *(a)* were refused on application and *(b)* were granted on application; and how many in each category cited myalgic encephalomyelitis or the category most closely approximating to myalgic encephalomyelitis as the principal disabling condition. [202825]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is set out as follows.

Disability living allowance (DLA) 2003–04

	All claims[1]	*Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)*[2]
Number of claims made	442,150	n/a
Number of claims allowed	217,525	[1]2,300
Number of claims refused	220,215	n/a
Number of claims reconsidered	120,510	n/a

Disability living allowance (DLA) 2003–04

	All claims[1]	*Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)*[2]
Number of claims refused after reconsideration	4,435	n/a
Number of claims allowed after reconsideration	116,075	n/a
Number of appeals received	84,115	n/a

[1] The figures for all claims are taken from the MIS computer system, 100 per cent. data for year ended 31 March 2004. Figures are in thousands rounded to the nearest 5.

[2] Figures for new awards for chronic fatigue syndromes, including ME/post viral medical conditions, are taken from a 5 per cent. sample for year ended 31 May 2004. Figures are in thousands rounded to the nearest 100.

Notes:

1. From November 2002, the methodology for producing the figures for all claims was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.
2. Claims received in one year are not necessarily cleared in the same year.
3. The number of claims reconsidered include applicants who received an award at a lower rate and/or for a shorter duration.
4. The figure for appeals received at the Appeals Service cannot be broken down by appeals without prior reconsideration and those that were received after reconsideration.
5. Medical conditions are not recorded on the MIS system and only a total figure can be provided.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost was of *(a)* an in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [202437]

Maria Eagle: Subsidies of various sizes for canteen facilities are provided in around 160 of our 1,800 offices. The cost to the Department for the year 2002–03 was £3.5 million and for the year 2003–04 was £3.7 million.

Pension Protection

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will place in the Library a copy of the estimates that he has made of the cost of providing full compensation for lost occupational pension rights among those workers whose schemes wound up before the introduction of the Pension Protection Fund. [203569]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government has not made estimates of the costs of providing full compensation for lost occupational pension rights among those workers whose schemes wound up before the introduction of the Pension Protection Fund (PPF).

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for how many workers who lost occupational pension rights owing to scheme wind-up the insolvency event was *(a)* between January and March 1997, *(b)* between April 1997 and March 2004 and *(c)* between April 2004 and March 2005. [203576]

Malcolm Wicks: The dates for eligibility for the Financial Assistance Scheme—as mentioned in my written ministerial statement issued on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 64–66WS—relate to the dates that schemes start to wind up. Issues concerning definitions of "employer insolvency", including the dates of any insolvency events and their timing in relation to the scheme wind up date, remain under consideration. The interactions of wind up dates and employer insolvency events are complex: for example, an employer may have more than one insolvency event, and the scheme may start to wind up sometime before or after the employer's initial insolvency event. Furthermore, there is no central source of data which identifies both scheme wind up dates and any insolvency events the employer connected to the scheme might have. Therefore it is not possible to answer the question in the form requested.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is his policy that the administrative costs to his Department of developing and operating the Financial Assistance Scheme will be met outwith the £400 million which has been allocated to meet the costs of the scheme. [203577]

Malcolm Wicks: The costs of operating the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) are still being assessed. The current policy and project development costs of FAS are being funded from departmental resources.

Pensions

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of the relevant populations of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in (i) the Scottish Borders, (ii) Scotland and (ii) Great Britain are entitled to the full basic state pension. [202535]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is in the following table:

	Men	*Women*
Great Britain	3,486,000	3,162,500
Percentage of relevant population in Great Britain	88.4	46.5
Scotland	305,500	307,100
Percentage of relevant population in Scotland	91.0	49.4
Scottish Borders	7,900	7,700
Percentage of relevant population in the Scottish Borders	89.6	50.3

Notes:

1. Figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
2. Data is rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
4. The relevant population refers to all males aged 65 and above and females aged 60 and above living in the specified areas.
5. A full basic State Pension (£77.45 in 2003–04) is paid to those who fully satisfy the contribution conditions either in their own right or where applicable, on the basis of their late or former spouse's contributions.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample as at 31 March 2004

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Accountancy Services

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total cost to her Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202329]

Mr. Caborn: The cost of external accountancy services to the Department was £659,624.01 in 2002–03 and £495,193.40 in 2003–04.

Boxing

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the trend in the number of people participating in boxing over the last five years. [202295]

Mr. Caborn: According to the Amateur Boxing Association of England (ABAofE) records, the total number of registered boxers in England over the past five years was as follows:

	Registered clubs	*Registered senior boxers*	*Registered junior boxers*	*Total registered boxers*
1999–2000	565	3,481	3,310	6,791
2000–01	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
2001–02	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
2002–03	584	3,854	4,065	7,919
2003–04	619	3,977	4,519	8,496

There is no firm statistical data currently available on the number of people who are either active "social" members of boxing clubs (but not boxing competitively) or who box as part of their fitness training activities—nor do we have an indication of the trend over the past five tears. At present, the ABAofE estimates this to be in the region of 30,000 upwards.

British Board of Film Classification

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to change the *(a)* membership and *(b)* constitution of the British Board of Film Classification; and if she will make a statement. [202297]

Estelle Morris: The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) is independent of government and is responsible for its own membership and constitution. The Government recognise the importance of preserving the independence of the BBFC and has no plans to intervene on these matters.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by her Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202347]

Mr. Caborn: Only press conferences and exhibitions are organised centrally and they are held internally, with no cost attached. Conferences, seminars, and workshops are organised and paid for (sometimes jointly and sometimes exclusively) by policy divisions across the Department. They are held both in-house and on non-departmental premises. The information relating to the title, purpose, date and cost of each could be answered only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total external spending by her Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by her Department over this period; and if she will make a statement. [202338]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has not itself incurred any costs on PFI consultants over the last two years.

The Royal Parks Agency, which is an Executive Agency, has employed consultants to advise on PFI schemes. Their total external spend on PFI consultants in 2003–04 was £95,035, and from 1 April 2004 to date they have incurred costs of £89,329. The Royal Parks Agency used six consultancy firms. The information relating to the number of full-time equivalent consultants, billed consultancy days and the implied average cost of each consultant could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to her Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [202344]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is as follows for my Department:

(a) Commission Regulation (EC) No 656/2004 of 7 April 2004 amending Regulation (EEC) No 752/93 laying down the provisions for the implementation of Council Regulation (EEC) No 3911/92 on the export of cultural goods.

Purpose: to amend the application form (under EU law) for an export licence for cultural goods.

(b) We do not have information on the cost to public funds of this regulation, and such information could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

(c) Cost to businesses: nil.

In addition, I should mention the following:

(a) Directive 2002/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on access to, and interconnection of, electronic communications networks and associated facilities (Access Directive); Directive 2002/20/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March

2002 on the authorisation of electronic communications networks and services (Authorisation Directive); Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive); and Directive 2002/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services (Universal Service Directive).

The purpose of these directives was to set a new community-wide framework for regulation in respect of electronic communications networks and services, including the removal of the requirement for licensing of telecommunications systems.

(b) We do not have information on the cost to public funds of these directives, and such information could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

(c) These Directives were implemented by way of the Communications Act 2003, for which DTI and DCMS were jointly responsible and for which a regulatory impact assessment was undertaken.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203340]

Mr. Caborn: There has been no change to Departmental Records Management policy since the passage of the Act and categories of files and their numbering system will continue. It has never been the policy of the Department to retain representative examples from files of categories destroyed.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203341]

Mr. Caborn: The table sets out the number of files that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have destroyed in the past five years

	Number of files
2000	5,168
2001	3,147
2002	4,996
2003	4,363
2004	4,097

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203342]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has not changed its policy regarding retention and destruction of Departmental files over the last five years.

English Heritage

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what effect the Treasury's requirement for efficiency savings at English Heritage will have on that body's work in the next three years. [203117]

Mr. Caborn: As a result of its efficiency programme, English Heritage will save up to £14.2 million over the next three years. This will be invested in front line services.

External Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total cost to her Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202346]

Mr. Caborn: The total cost to the Department of using external consultants was £469,480.60 in 2002–03 and £473,785.35 in 2003–04.

Free Television Licences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pensioners aged over 75 years living in *(a)* North Southwark and Bermondsey constituency and *(b)* the London borough of Southwark are (i) entitled to a free television licence and (ii) receiving a free television licence. [203396]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. It is not therefore possible to estimate take-up of the concession on a local basis. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the North Southwark and Bermondsey constituency in 2003–04 was 3,995, according to Department for Work and Pensions records. The number of such households in the London borough of Southwark was 8,930.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will estimate the cost of exempting student-only houses from paying the television licence fee. [202567]

Estelle Morris: It is not possible to estimate the cost of providing television licence fee concessions for all student-only households, because TV licensing's records do not distinguish between student and other households and information on student numbers is not held in such a way as to enable the number of student-only households to be calculated.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost is to the Exchequer of the free television licence for those over 75 years; and what would be the cost of offering a free television licence to all those in receipt of pension credit only. [202944]

Estelle Morris: The cost of providing free television licences to people aged 75 or over in 2003–04 was £408 million. The cost of providing free television licences to all households in receipt of pension credit would be in the region of £310 million a year.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to her Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if she will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200615]

Mr. Caborn: In compliance with Government guidance, DCMS is committed to the payment of all invoices within agreed contractual provision or within 30 days of presentation of a valid invoice. The current target for payment of invoices is that 100 per cent. of invoices are paid in time, including disputed invoices once disputes have been settled.

For the period November 2003 to October 2004, the Department paid 99.3 per cent. of valid invoices on time, the average number of days between receipt of invoices and payment being 10.2. Information regarding average length time between the date of invoices from suppliers and payment by the Department is not held on the Department's accounting system and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Two invoices (0.03 per cent.) were paid after 90 days.

Olympic/Paralympic Athletes

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has for funding *(a)* Olympic and *(b)* Paralympic athletes up to 2008. [202740]

Mr. Caborn: We plan to at least maintain the previous level of investment for the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic cycle. This will result in approximately £98 million being available to support summer and winter Olympians and Paralympians.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many written questions for her Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 session. [201546]

Mr. Caborn: All written questions tabled to DCMS received a reply in the 2003–04 parliamentary session.

Seven written questions received the following answer on the final day of the session:

"It has not proved possible to respond to my (right) hon. Friend/the (right) hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation."

Six of these questions were tabled between 2–16 November, and the other was tabled on 28 October.

At all times DCMS Ministers make every effort to answer written questions substantively before Prorogation. However, this is not always possible. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what target her Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by her Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202555]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS aims to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their Named Day question on the named day and endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but the Department for Culture, Media and Sport makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

The percentage of answers that failed to meet these targets in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04 is in the table.

Percentage

Parliamentary session	*Ordinary Written*	*Named Day*
1997–98	[1]—	[1]—
1998–99	54.8	62.9
1999–2000	47.0	69.0
2000–01	39.1	51.5
2001–02	46.3	55.2
2002–03	47.5	44.5
2003–04	32.3	30.5

[1] Figures for parliamentary session 1997–98 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Public-Private Partnership Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total external spending by her Department was on public-private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by her Department over this period; and if she will make a statement. [202348]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS has not been involved in any public-private partnerships and has not needed consultancy.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many complaints were made by

departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203464]

Mr. Caborn: There have been no complaints made by civil servants at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

Sports and Community Clubs

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to limit the increase in licensing fees for sports and community clubs under the Licensing Act 2004. [203704]

Mr. Caborn: Fees will be limited to full recovery by licensing authorities of their costs of administration, inspection and enforcement under the terms of the Licensing Act 2003. We are currently undertaking a consultation on the fee levels, which ends on 23 December 2004. We welcome the views of sports and community clubs as part of that consultation. All responses will be carefully considered before the fees are finalised.

Swimming

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assistance she is giving the Amateur Swimming Association to meet the costs of training swimming coaches. [203705]

Mr. Caborn: The Amateur Swimming Association's coaching qualifications are recognised on the National Qualifications Framework. This means that approved centres offering swimming coaching training can draw down mainstream funding through the Learning and Skills Council, to support training delivery. Swimming is one of the sports taking forward the UK Coaching Certificate. As such, the Amateur Swimming Association has been allocated funding for three years from 2004–05 by UK Sport to develop its coach education systems.

Theatre

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what assessment has been made by the Arts Council West Midlands of the staging of innovative performances at the Lichfield Garrick Theatre since its opening; and if she will make a statement; [203347]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the impact on the arts in Staffordshire of the Arts Council's publication, "A vision for the arts in the West Midlands 2003–06"; and if she will make a statement; [203348]

(3) what assessment she has made of funding for the arts in Staffordshire; and if she will make a statement; [203349]

(4) if she will make a statement on the Arts Council West Midlands policy regarding support for theatres owned by local authorities; and if she will make a statement; [203350]

(5) how many times representatives of the Arts Council West Midlands have visited the Lichfield Garrick Theatre since 1 July 2003; [203351]

(6) what her Department's policy is towards the support of innovative art in the West Midlands; and if she will make a statement; [203353]

(7) what support has been given to the staging of new theatrical art in Staffordshire by the Arts Council West Midlands; and if she will make a statement; [203354]

(8) what support has been given in funding to theatres in Staffordshire by the Arts Council West Midlands since 1 July 2003. [203352]

Estelle Morris: Arts Council England (ACE) operates at arms-length from the Government. It delegates monies to the Regional Arts Councils which allocate funds in accordance with the strategic priorities of the Department and ACE.

Records relating specifically to grants for either new theatrical art or innovative art are not held by ACE. The £30,000 grant awarded by ACE to the Lichfield Garrick Theatre was for the production of new pieces of work to celebrate its opening. During 2004–05 the Lichfield Garrick became a regularly funded organisation (RFO) of ACE and is in receipt of £30,780. It is due to receive the same next year with subsequent funding to be decided following confirmation of ACE's future funding allocation. Since 1 July 2003, four official visits have been made by ACE to the Garrick Theatre.

Funding information is not collected for individual counties, neither has ACE a specific policy regarding support for theatres owned by local authorities. However, funding to theatres in Staffordshire has totalled £113,390 since 1 July 2003.

ACE's annual review for 2004, placed in the Library of both Houses, reports on its activity during both years including activity in the West Midlands.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Foreign Legislatures

David Burnside: To ask the Leader of the House what restrictions exist in UK law on the participation of hon. Members in the legislative chambers of foreign countries. [203701]

Mr. Hain: A member of the legislature of any country or territory outside the Commonwealth (other than Ireland) is disqualified from membership of the House of Commons under section 1(1)(*e*) of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975, as amended by section 1 of the Disqualifications Act 2000. There is no restriction in UK law on the participation of hon. Members in the legislative chambers of foreign countries, while not member of that legislature.

Government Amendments

Bob Spink: To ask the Leader of the House how many Government amendments were accepted in the House of Lords in the last session. [202298]

Mr. Woolas: Statistics for session 2003–04 under preparation in the House of Lords suggest that 2,915 Government amendments were made to Government Bills in the House of Lords last Session. This does not include amendments made on Consideration of Commons Amendments.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abandoned Motor Vehicles

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many motor vehicles have been abandoned in Greater London in each of the last three years. [202729]

Alun Michael: Statistics for abandoned vehicles removed and destroyed were first compiled in the Defra Municipal Waste Management Survey for 2000–01. Results for authorities in London are available for 2000–01 and 2001–02. Results for 2002–03 are supplemented by results from the Defra Abandoned Vehicle Survey 2002–03.

Numbers of abandoned vehicles removed and destroyed by each London Borough and Waste Collection Authority are listed as follows:

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Barking and Dagenham	2,761	n/a	3,201
Barnet	3,287	4,431	3,940
Bexley	1,356	1,776	2,391
Brent	3,471	4,115	4,184
Bromley	3,895	4,215	3,129
Camden	1,629	1,897	1,676
City of London	n/a	n/a	158
Croydon	2,878	4,376	4,200
Ealing	3,754	4,916	3,975
Enfield	4,711	6,347	4,973
Greenwich	3,120	4,200	4,429
Hackney	2,700	4,066	3,609
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,188	1,430	1,473
Haringey	6,500	[1]4,560	5,900
Harrow	1,914	[1]2,249	2,650
Havering	1,250	3,126	2,086
Hillingdon	2,286	3,128	3,741
Hounslow	2,247	3,118	3,125
Islington	2,619	3,643	2,748
Kensington and Chelsea	195	232	265
Kingston upon Thames	739	2,159	3,053
Lambeth	3,308	3,775	3,577
Lewisham	5,000	4,671	3,554
Merton	1683	2,140	2,165
Newham	6,704	8,117	3,105
Redbridge	1,562	2,219	2,005
Richmond upon Thames	1,201	1,201	970
Southwark	1,934	2,848	2,245
Sutton	1,651	2,166	2,055
Tower Hamlets	n/a	n/a	2,781
Waltham Forest	2,716	3,466	3,351
Wandsworth	2,571	2,794	2,753
Westminster	496	333	336
London total	83,900	104,500	94,500

[1] for 2001–02 = GLA estimate
n/a = results not available

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202361]

Alun Michael: The Department is fully committed to equality on the basis of age. One of the stated values of the Department is that we create an environment for our employees and customers, free from discrimination on the grounds of age.

In anticipation of the Age Legislation in October 2006, the Department has identified policies and procedures where the legislation will have an impact and the Department is working to ensure that all areas of its work is fully reviewed for any age bias.

The Department has already introduced flexibility around the retirement age that enables older staff to stay on until 65. In addition diversity training, which is available to all Defra employees, includes raising awareness of age discrimination.

Carbon Trust

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* resource budget, *(b)* staff numbers and *(c)* running costs were of the Carbon Trust in 2003–04. [202141]

Mr. Morley: The Carbon Trust, as a private company, publishes annual accounts containing the information you have requested. The report for 2003–04 can be accessed via www.thecarbontrust.co.uk

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on collaboration between the Carbon Trust and the Clean Energy Group. [202143]

Mr. Morley: The Carbon Trust takes a strong interest in international low carbon programmes and investment initiatives. The Trust keeps in close touch with a number of agencies, including the Clean Energy Group and other US organisations, to exchange best practice in how low carbon technologies can best be developed and brought to market more quickly. The Carbon Trust is a private company funded by Defra and the Devolved administrations.

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the United Kingdom will ratify the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. [202068]

Mr. Morley: The UK ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on 19 November 2003 and it entered into force in the UK on 17 February 2004.

Crèche Facilities

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what crèche facilities are provided by her Department; and at what cost. [202360]

Alun Michael: Defra currently makes the following childcare provisions:

Workplace Provisions

We have on on-site workplace nurseries at five of our sites, Kings Pool in York, CSL Sand Mutton, Guildford, London and Bristol. Defra in Exeter has recently closed and with it the childcare provision.

We have the following partnership arrangements providing workplace provision in London, Bristol and elsewhere through such providers as Buffer Bear, Childcare Enterprise; Frendz club.

Childcare Vouchers and Payment to a Third Party

This does not apply in Defra and we operate neither scheme.

Salary Sacrifice Scheme

This is due to start between January and April 2005.

Defra provide 150 full-time subsidised nursery places across the five sites mentioned above. The actual number using the nursery is higher than this figure due to many of the places being allocated on a part time basis. The cost of nursery places and the amount of subsidy varies for each location.

The places are allocated as follows:

London	11
Bristol	3
York Kings Pool	49
York CSL	47
Guildford	40

School holiday playschemes places are available to departmental and agency staff across eight sites. The number of users varies at each site and for each school holiday period. These are: London, York, Bristol, Guildford, Nottingham, Taunton, Weybridge and Worcester.

The overall budget for childcare provision is currently £88,500 for York and London. Other sites are funded from local budgets.

We are aiming to review current fees and subsidies in 2005.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost has been of criminal damage to her Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202357]

Alun Michael: The occurrence of criminal damage to the Department's buildings over the past two years has been so low that separate records have not been kept.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in her Department in each of the last two years. [202350]

Alun Michael: Defra estimates its expenditure over the last two years on the following activities to have been:

£

	2002–03	*2003–04*
(a) New builds	14,709,000	30,878,000
(b) Demolition rebuilds	51,000	605,000
(c) Private finance initiative projects	Nil	1,029,000

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by her Department in each of the last two years. [202354]

Alun Michael: Refurbishment work carried out on the Defra estate in the last 2 years was estimated to cost:

£

2002–03	3,804,000
2003–04	9,783,000

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by her Department in each of the last two years. [202356]

Alun Michael: From information held centrally, the cost of running the Department's canteen facilities in financial year 2002–03 was £432,328 and in financial year 2003–04 the cost was £453,490.

Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the total amount of *(a)* carbon dioxide and *(b)* greenhouse gas emissions per person in the United Kingdom, broken down by (i) emissions produced within the UK, (ii) emissions including those produced in other countries for goods exported into the UK, (iii) emissions including those produced in other countries for goods exported into the UK but excluding goods exported from the UK and (iv) international aviation relating to UK activities. [202067]

Mr. Morley: (i) In 2002, the most recent year for which data are available, emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the UK were 551.0 million tonnes, and emissions of total greenhouse gases, weighted together using global warming potentials, were equivalent to 648.4 million tonnes CO_2. The population of the UK was just over 59 million in 2002, making the average emissions on a per person basis for CO_2 9.30 tonnes and 10.95 tonnes CO_2 equivalent for total greenhouse gases.

(ii & iii) Under internationally agreed guidelines, carbon dioxide and total greenhouse emissions associated with the production of goods are reported in the greenhouse gas inventory of the country in which the goods are produced. Emissions from goods exported from the UK are not separately estimated.

(iv) Emissions associated with international air transport appear in national greenhouse gas inventories as a memo item and are not included in national totals. Total UK emissions of CO_2 from international aviation were estimated to be 26.9 million tonnes of CO_2 in 2002, and emissions of total greenhouse gases were estimated to be 27.3 million tonnes of CO_2. Emissions per passenger are not estimated.

EU Legislation

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to her Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [202364]

Alun Michael: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs plays a leading role in the UK's EU policy on the environment, agriculture, fisheries, animal and plant health.

In answer to part *(a)*, the table shows all Directives agreed in the UK in the years 2002 and 2003, for which Defra took the lead, and which have since been implemented in the UK. Regulations have a direct effect in the laws of member states and do not usually require Governments to take action to implement them. The table does not show Regulations, as this information is not held centrally and could be assembled only at disproportionate cost. Details of all Directives and Regulations in force can be found on the Eur-Lex database available on the European Union's website.

The Department does not hold information in the form requested in part *(b)*. This information could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

For part *(c)*, Departments are required to produce regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) for proposals, including those originating in European legislation, likely to impose significant costs on business, charities or voluntary organisations. Copies of these are placed in the Library of the House.

Directive No	*Directive Name*
2002/003/EC	Relating to ozone in ambient air
2002/004/EC	Registration of establishments keeping laying hens
2002/005/EC	Amending Annex II to Council Directive 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues in and on certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables
2002/008/EC	Minimum conditions for examining vegetables and agricultural varieties
2002/018/EC	Amending Annex I to Council Directive 91/414/EEC concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market to include isoproturon as an active substance
2002/023/EC	Fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues in and on cereals, foodstuffs of animal origin and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables respectively
2002/028/EC	Protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the community
2002/029/EC	Amending Directive 2001/32/EC as regards certain protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the community

Directive No	*Directive Name*
2002/031/EC	Energy labelling of household air conditioners
2002/033/EC	Amending Directives 90/425/EEC and 92/118/EEC as regards health requirements for animal by-products
2002/036/EC	On protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community
2002/037/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include ethofumesate as an active substance
2002/040/EC	Commission Directive 2002/40/EC implementing Council Directive 92/75/EEC with regard to energy labelling of household electric ovens
2002/042/EC	Fixing maximum levels of pesticide residues
2002/045/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (short-chain chlorinated paraffins)
2002/048/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include iprovalicarb, prosulfuron and sulfosulfuron as active substances
2002/060/EC	Laying down specific provisions for the control of African swine fever
2002/062/EC	Adapting to technical progress for the ninth time Annex I to Council Directive 76/769/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the member states on marketing and use of (organostannic compounds)
2002/063/EC	Establishing community methods of sampling for the official control of pesticides residues in and on products of the plant and animal origin and repealing Directive 79/700/EEC
2002/064/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include cinidon-ethyl, cyhalofop butyl, famoxadone, florasulam, metalaxyl-M and picolinafen as active substances
2002/066/EC	Amending the Annexes to Directive 76/895/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for pesticides residues in and on fruit and vegetables
2002/068/EC	On the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants
2002/071/EC	Amending the Annexes to Directive 76/895/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for pesticides residues (formothion, dimethoate and oxydemeton-methyl)
2002/076/EC	Fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues (metsulfuron methyl) in and on cereals and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables
2002/079/EC	Amending the Annexes to Council Directives 76/895/EEC, 86/362/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards fixing of maximum levels for certain pesticides residues
2002/081/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include flumioxazine as an active substance (Plant Protection Products)
2002/097/EC	Amending the Annexes to Council Directives 86/362/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues in cereals and foodstuffs in products of animal and plant origin
2002/100/EC	Fixing of maximum residue levels for azoxystrobin
2003/002/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of arsenic
2003/005/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include deltamethrin as active substance
2003/011/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (pentabromodiphenyl ether octabromodiphenyl ether)
2003/021/EC	As regards certain protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the Community

Directive No	Directive Name
2003/022/EC	On protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community
2003/023/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include imazamox, oxasulfuron, ethoxysulfuron, foramsulfuron, oxadiargyl and cyazofamid as active substances
2003/031/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include 2,4-DB, betacyfluthrin, cyfluthrin, iprodione, linuron, maleic hydrazide and pendimethalin as active substances
2003/039/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include propireb and propyzamide as active substances
2003/045/EC	On the marketing and use of seed of oil and fibre plants
2003/046/EC	As regards certain protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the Community
2003/047/EC	On protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community
2003/053/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (nonylphenol, nonylphenol ethoxylate and cement)
2003/060/EC	Fixing maximum levels for certain pesticide residues in and on cereals, foodstuffs of animal origin and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables
2003/062/EC	Maximum pesticide residue levels for hexaconazole, clofentezine, myclobutanyl and prochloraz
2003/066/EC	Energy labelling of household electric refrigerators, freezers and their combinations
2003/068/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include trifloxystrobin, carfentrazone-ethyl, meso-trone, fenamidone and isoxaflutole as active substances
2003/069/EC	Maximum residue levels for chlormequat, lambda-cyhalothrin, kresoxim-methyl, azoxystrobin and certain dithiocarbamates
2003/070/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include mecoprop, mecoprop-P and propiconazole as active substances
2003/074/EC	Concerning the prohibition on the use in stock farming of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action and of beta-agonists
2003/079/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include Coniothyrium minitrans as an active substance
2003/081/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include molinate, thiram and ziram as active substances
2003/082/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC as regards standard phrases for special risks and safety precautions for plant protection products
2003/084/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include flurtamone, flufenacet, iodosulfuron, dimethenamide-p, picoxystrobin, fosthiazate-silthiofam as active substances
2003/090/EC	As regards the characteristics to be covered as a minimum by the examination and the minimum conditions for examining certain varieties of agricultural plant species
2003/091/EC	As regards the characteristics to be covered as a minimum by the examination and the minimum conditions for examining certain varieties of vegetable species
2003/099/EC	On the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents

Directive No	Directive Name
2003/112/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include paraquat as an active substance
2003/113/EC	Amending Annexes to Council Directives 86/362/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for certain pesticide residues in and on cereals, foodstuffs of animal origin and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables
2003/118/EC	Amending Annexes to Council Directives 76/895/EEC, 86/362/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards maximum residue levels for acephate, 2,4-D and parathion-methyl
2003/119/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include mesosulfron, propoxycarbazone and zoxamide as active substances

EU Sugar Regime

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she plans to take to ensure market stability after the reform of the EU Sugar Regime. [201882]

Alun Michael: The European Commission has still to make detailed proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime. In setting out its preferred approach, the Commission has stressed the need for a sustainable long term policy perspective, including greater market orientation and improved competitiveness. The July 2004 Communication to the Council set out a range of measures intended to provide for a stable future. The Government have welcomed these ideas as an important step in the right direction.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of the reform of the EU Sugar Regime on the *(a)* number of UK sugar beet producers and *(b)* sugar price. [201883]

Alun Michael: The European Commission has still to make detailed proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime. When putting forward options for political debate in September 2003, the Commission published a summary of impact assessment work and has since released additional analysis to support the preferred approach set out in its July 2004 Communication. The Government have commented on this in the Explanatory Memoranda submitted for scrutiny proposes and has also published the results of independent research commissioned by Defra into the economic, social and environmental implications of sugar reform. A full Regulatory Impact Assessment will be prepared once formal proposals are available.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to protect the interests of UK sugar producers in the reform of the EU Sugar Regime. [201884]

Alun Michael: The Government's aim is to secure a more economically rational and market-based sugar regime consistent with our international trade and development obligations and our wider sustainability objectives. A sugar reform which meets these conditions ought to be to the advantage of everyone.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to ensure that there will be competitive prices following the reform of the EU Sugar Regime. [201885]

Alun Michael: The European Commission has still to make detailed proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime. Its July 2004 Communication calls for a significant reduction in institutional price support, including the replacement of intervention by a new reference price system. The Commission has also highlighted the need for greater market orientation and improved competitiveness. The Government have welcomed these ideas as a important step in the right direction, but will need to consider the position further once formal proposals are available and negotiations begin.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether there will be a sugar quota cut for the UK following the reform of the EU Sugar Regime. [201886]

Alun Michael: The European Commission has still to make detailed proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime. Its July 2004 Communication calls for simplification of the present quota system by merging the A and B quotas into a single quota and for a reduction in the resulting total quota level in order to reach a sustainable balance on the EU sugar market. This approach, if adopted by the Council of Ministers, would result in a quota cut for all sugar producing member states, including the UK.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the Government are supporting beet-specific compensation following the reform of the EU Sugar Regime; and if she will make a statement; [201887]

(2) whether the Government are supporting mandatory decoupled compensation in the reform of the EU Sugar Regime. [201888]

Alun Michael: The European Commission has still to make detailed proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime. Its July 2004 Communication envisages the introduction of partial compensation for producers in the form of a direct decoupled payment, with the same historical reference period and integrated into the single farm payment scheme resulting from the June 2003 Common Agricultural Policy reforms. The Government have supported this general approach, but will need to consider the position further once formal proposals are available and negotiations being.

GDP/Greenhouse Gases

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of historical links between GDP and greenhouse gas emissions. [202092]

Mr. Morley: Greenhouse gas emissions per unit of GDP in the UK reduced by approximately 36 per cent. between 1990 and 2002. The improving ratio is predominantly due to a combination of energy efficiency improvements and structural change in the UK economy, lower emissions of non-CO_2 gases and fuel switching in the electricity supply industry.

Oil Tanks

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial measures she plans to provide to assist householders to comply with regulations from the Environment Agency on relocating oil tanks. [201353]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is using its general powers under the Water Resources Act 1991 to promote action by owners of domestic oil storage tanks to reduce the risk of pollution of an important groundwater source, used for public potable supply, underneath the village of Otterton in East Devon.

Neither the Department nor the Agency has plans or funds to offer financial assistance but the Agency will explore with those in genuine difficulty whether it is possible to take remedial action over a longer time period.

Ramin

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps are being taken to ensure the implementation of the Appendix II listing of ramin agreed at the conference of the parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species meeting in Thailand immediately after the 90-day period when the new listing is due to come into force. [202079]

Mr. Bradshaw: This issue is to be discussed at the next meeting of the EU Committee on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora on 14 December 2004 and we will be pressing the Commission to ensure that this, and all the other CITES listings, are implemented within the 90 day deadline.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what efforts are being taken to encourage action at an EU level to ensure that ramin is listed under Annex B of EU Regulation 338/97. [202080]

Mr. Morley: Proposals to amend the Annexes to Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97, including the listing of ramin on Annex B, will be discussed at the next meeting of the EU Committee on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora on 14 December 2004. These changes are needed to give effect to the amendments to the CITES appendices agreed in Bangkok last October and the UK will be pressing the Commission to ensure that they are adopted within the 90 day deadline.

Recycling (Christmas Products)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* Christmas cards and *(b)* Christmas trees that were recycled in each year since 1990; what support she provides to local authorities with regard to the recycling of Christmas cards; and if she will make a statement. [202077]

Mr. Morley: The Department does not collect separate data specific to either of these two recyclates.

Defra does support and takes part in a Christmas Card Recycling Scheme run by the Woodland Trust. Available data is shown in the following table:

Year in which recyling carried out	*Number of cards recycled (millions)*	*Weight (tonnes)*
1999	30.5	600
2000	20	400
2001	41	800
2002	34	671
2003	40	800
2004	45	883

The charity Environ estimates that 750,000 Christmas trees were recycled during 2003 (approx 12.5 per cent. of the total number sold) but they do not have information for previous years.

Defra's Waste Implementation Programme provides a range of support to local authorities to help them improve their recycling and composting performance.

Saker Falcons

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of the illegal taking of saker falcons from the wild for falconry purposes on this species' wild population across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. [202072]

Mr. Morley: At the 19th meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Animals Committee in August 2003, the Committee decided to include the saker falcon in the review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix II species. Appendix II species are recognised as vulnerable species that may become endangered unless trade in them is strictly regulated.

A copy of the full document may be found at http://www.cites.org/eng/cttee/AC/20/E20-08-1.pdf.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department is taking to raise awareness among falconers of the impact which illegal trade can have on wild populations of saker falcons. [202073]

Mr. Morley: Officials from the Department have regular contact with falconers in the UK and have also attended falconry events overseas. These forums are an ideal opportunity to disseminate the latest information on all birds of prey and falconry, including the effect on the numbers of wild populations of falcons because of their illegal taking and trade. Additionally, there are regular bulletins issued by the Department which are sent to falconers, which contain advice on changes in the conservation status, and levels of protection and control, which may be afforded to a specific species.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department is taking *(a)* to raise awareness and *(b)* to improve the training of the UK police in dealing with the illegal trade in saker falcons. [202074]

Mr. Morley: Defra contributes to Police Wildlife Crime Officer's training principally through the Partnership for Action against wildlife Crime. Such training includes advice and information about the legislation governing all wildlife species of conservation concern, as well as about offences against those controls, the powers available to the police to investigate them and the penalties which the courts may impose

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department is taking to raise awareness among *(a)* transport companies and *(b)* HM Customs and Excise of the problems of illegal trade in saker falcons. [202075]

Mr. Morley: Officials from the Department have advised transport associations and individual transport companies of the necessity to comply with the requirements of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). This advice emphasises the importance to transporters of obtaining the correct CITES documentation in order to move such species across international borders, and the ramifications to their customers of the failure to meet those requirements.

As the first point of contact on entry into the UK, HM Customs and Excise officials are also aware of CITES and the requirement that the appropriate import documents to be presented. This applies to the saker falcon and all other CITES listed species.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will introduce mandatory registration schemes for people wishing to keep saker falcons in captivity. [202076]

Mr. Bradshaw: A full public consultation is about to commence on changes to the species currently included on Schedule 4 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If, as a result of the review, the saker falcon is included in the Schedule, any person keeping one in captivity will be committing an offence if they fail to register it.

Snowfall Predictions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the predicted future annual number of days when there is snowfall is for *(a)* London, *(b)* Edinburgh, *(c)* Bristol and *(d)* Inverness in (i) 2010, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2030 and (iv) 2050. [202078]

Mr. Morley: In April 2002, the Department published new climate change scenarios for the UK. These scenarios include information on total winter snowfall amounts, but not number of snowfall days. Snowfall totals decline substantially over the whole UK and in all scenarios, with the largest percentage reductions around the coast and in the English lowlands.

While there are no robust estimates at the scale of individual cities, the scenarios indicate that in the London, Edinburgh, Bristol and Inverness areas snowfall could be reduced by up to 55, 50, 57 and 59 per cent. respectively, by the 2050s (compared to the 1961–1990 average baseline), depending on the degree of future climate change.

For the particular years in question a general scaling back of the UK-wide data gives the following estimates of the reduction in snowfall over these periods, depending on whether there is a low or high degree of climate change:

	Percentage reduction
2010	17–30
2020	22–38
2030	27–47
2050	37–65

These figures represent general trends, not predictions of the amount of snowfall in specific years, which will be greatly influenced by natural year-to-year variability, particularly in the first few decades of the century.

Further information is available in the full report in the Libraries of both Houses.

Waste Products

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate what volume and proportion of food from *(a)* supermarkets, *(b)* households, *(c)* restaurants and other eating establishments and *(d)* other sources became waste products in the last period for which figures are available. [202087]

Mr. Morley: The data is not available in the form requested. The Environment Agency's National Waste Production Survey (NWPS) of 20,000 businesses, conducted in 1998/99, produced the following estimates.

Sector	*Quantity of waste in tonnes*	*As percentage of food waste produced by the Commercial and Industrial sectors*	*As percentage of total waste produced by the C and II sectors*
Retail	253,000	9.77	0.29
Hotels and Restaurants	10,000	0.38	0.01
Food, Drinks and Tobacco	1,939,000	74.89	2.24
Total	2,202,000	85.04	2.54

However these figures only relate to that fraction of the waste that is definitely food. A considerable amount of food waste was also contained within the general and biodegradable category. The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) estimate that the amount of food waste produced by the hotel and restaurant sector, for example, could be as high as three million tonnes per year.

The most recent estimates for UK municipal waste arisings and compositional statistics were collected for the Strategy Unit Report in 2002.
From this data it is estimated that about 5.7 million tonnes of UK Municipal Solid Waste is food waste, or approximately 15 per cent. of total arisings.

Government is currently consulting on a waste data strategy, designed to improve the quality of waste data in the interests of all potential users.

DEFENCE

Asbestos

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to decontaminate those of his Department's files which have become contaminated by asbestos; and what he estimates the cost of such decontamination to be. [199851]

Mr. Caplin: A project board has been set up to consider the options open to the Ministry of Defence that would enable files, previously stored in an asbestos contaminated environment, to be safely handled. The board is chaired by the MOD's departmental records officer and includes representatives from several Ministry of Defence branches together with a representative from the National Archives. A number of options are under consideration, with plans at an advanced stage for a short pilot project, to commence early in 2005. At the conclusion of this work possible solutions, together with projected costs, will be evaluated. It is not possible reliably to estimate the cost in advance of the pilot project.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department discovered that certain of its files had become contaminated by asbestos; and what action was taken in response to enable those files to be used. [199854]

Mr. Caplin: The presence of asbestos in the basement area of the Old War Office Building was confirmed in May 2003.

A decision was immediately made to safeguard the information contained in the records stored there and during the period June to December 2003 the files were progressively listed and packed to ensure that they could be safely handled. At the same time it was possible to implement the decontamination of the affected area of the building.

Some 3,000 crates of affected files were transferred to another secure location during May 2004.

Options open to the MOD to enable files to be safely handled so that access to the information in them can be restored were under consideration from the beginning. In August 2004, the departmental records officer decided that their development should be overseen by a formal project board.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect asbestos contamination of his Department's files will have on access to those files under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [199855]

Mr. Caplin: The information contained in the files previously stored in an asbestos contaminated basement has been safeguarded. A project board has been set up to formalise the consideration of the options open to the Ministry of Defence whereby this information may be made accessible for both departmental use, to enable the Ministry of Defence to respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act and to allow the normal transfer of records to the National Archives.

However, in view of the nature of the hazard posed to those who are likely to come into contact with the files, there must be a strict health and safety regime in place. In the circumstances, requests for information from files affected will be temporarily deferred until a fully operational facility is in place for their safe handling.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of those files contaminated with asbestos he estimates to be accessible to the public under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [199856]

Mr. Caplin: The Freedom of Information Act requires a case-by-case assessment in the circumstances of the time as to whether information which is the subject of a request may be withheld under any of the exemptions in the Act. It is therefore not possible to make an overall estimate.

Astute Class Submarines

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the original *(a)* estimated cost and *(b)* in-service delivery date was of the first three Astute class submarines; what the latest estimate is; and if he will make a statement. [199989]

Mr. Ingram: The National Audit Officer's Major Projects Report for 2004 has reported an expected total cost of £3,484 million against a re-costed approval of £2,578 million. The first of class, HMS Astute, had originally been expected to enter service in June 2005. HMS Astute is scheduled to be delivered to the Ministry of Defence by 2009. The second of class, HMS Ambush, will follow in mid 2010, and the third of class, HMS Artful, in 2012.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many cluster munitions were imported in each year since 1992; what the total value of imports was in each year; and what the countries of origin were of these imports. [200300]

Mr. Ingram: There have been no imports of air launched cluster munitions since 1992. Ground launched systems consist of:

Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) based on a US design with the M26 rockets manufactured under licence in Germany

	Quantity	*Estimated value (£ million)*
1992	6,816	38.756
1993	8,058	49.025
1994	8,670	56.441
1995	6,030	42.004

Shell 155mm HE L20A1 Extended Range Bomblet Shell (ERBS) of which the following quantities have been purchased since 1992 sourced from Israel, quantity 30,345 in 1996/97, quantity 26,010 in year 2003 and quantity 3,009 in year 2004. I am withholding information on costs on the grounds of commercial confidentiality (Exemption 13 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information).

Compensation

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his policy for ex-gratia compensation payments to former civilian internees in the far east region. [201889]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the response I made in the debate on the Ex-Gratia Payment Scheme on 7 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 696–700.

CVF (Costs)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* estimated cost and *(b)* forecast in-service date was at the time the CVF was commissioned; and what the current forecasts are;. [201642]

Mr. Ingram: Estimates for the cost and forecast in-service date of the Future Carrier programme continue to be refined during the Assessment Phase and will be confirmed when we take the main investment decision, scheduled for 2005. The target acquisition cost for the two carriers is around £3 billion with target in-service dates of 2012 and 2015.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203337]

Mr. Caplin: No change is envisaged in the selection policy for the preservation of records on account of the passage of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203339]

Mr. Caplin: No substantive changes have been made in the last five years to the guidance. This is updated as necessary to reflect changing requirements.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many files held by the Department have been destroyed in each year since 1997. [200695]

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203338]

Mr. Caplin: The initial review of most files is delegated to the originating branch and there is no requirement for central reporting of statistics on destruction. Statistics are available for the volume of files centrally reviewed by the departmental records officer's staff and designated for destruction. Figures for each of the last five years are available and are given in linear metres of records:

	Reviewed	*For destruction*
1999–2000	2,080	1,769
2000–01	2,233	1,407
2001–02	1,787	1,090
2002–03	3,707	3,040
2003–04	3,649	3,211

Energy Purchasing

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much he estimates his Department will save in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2007–08 by coordinating the purchase of energy with the NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency. [203652]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has no plans to co-ordinate the purchasing of energy with the NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency.

Manning Control Point Reviews

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions *(a)* the King's Own Scottish Borderers, *(b)* The Royal Scots, *(c)* The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, *(d)* The Black Watch, *(e)* the Parachute Regiment, *(f)* The Green Howards, *(g)* The Royal Irish Regiment, *(h)* The Royal Green Jackets, (i) The Queen's Own Hussars, *(j)* The Royal Signals and *(k)* The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers have received lists of names for manning control point reviews in the last 18 months. [201487]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is as follows:

	Number
The King's Own Scottish Borderers	0
The Royal Scots	0
The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	0
The Black Watch	0
The Parachute Regiment	6
The Green Howards	3
The Royal Irish Regiment	6
The Royal Green Jackets	3
The Queen's Royal Hussars[1]	5
Royal Corps of Signals	0
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	0

[1] The Queen's Own Hussars were amalgamated with the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars in 1993, therefore the information provided is for the amalgamated regiment, the Queen's Royal Hussars.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when and how each soldier whose name is included on lists sent to units for the purpose of manning control point reviews is informed that they are under career review. [201488]

Mr. Caplin: Soldiers are not informed that their name has been included on the list, which would include the names of all soldiers who match the parameters for review. They would be informed if their Commanding Officer recommended them for discharge as a result of the review.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated administration cost was of producing manning control point reviews for *(a)* The Black Watch, *(b)* The Parachute Regiment and *(c)* The Royal Signals in the last 18 months. [201492]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Medals

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the unit cost is of striking a campaign medal in *(a)* cupronickel and *(b)* silver; [201735]

(2) what the benefits to *(a)* the recipient and *(b)* the Government are of striking campaign medals in (i) cupronickel and (ii) silver; [201736]

(3) what the estimated cost is of reverting from striking campaign medals in cupronickel to silver; [201737]

(4) if he will revert to the practice of striking campaign medals in silver; and if he will make a statement. [201738]

Mr. Caplin: Campaign medals, such as the General Service Medal, are made from silver. War medals, such as the Iraq Medal, have, since the Second World War, been made from cupronickel. There are no plans to revert to the practice of striking war medals in silver. The additional cost of striking a war medal in silver would depend on the market rate for silver bullion and the number of medals issued. The current difference in unit cost is approximately £10. The current unit cost of making a campaign medal in silver is £23.31 plus VAT plus bullion (which varies in price but at present is £5.92 per unit). The current unit cost of making a war medal in cupronickel is £19.93 plus VAT. While the silver medal is clearly a superior product, the quality of the cupronickel medal is considered acceptable and no justification is seen for a 17 per cent. cost increase, especially given the large number of war medals made.

Merlin Helicopter

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on which *(a)* frigates and *(b)* type-45 destroyers it is proposed to deploy the Merlin helicopter. [201630]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is as follows:

HMS Argyll, Lancaster, Iron Duke, Monmouth, Montrose, Westminster, Northumberland, Richmond, Sutherland, Somerset, Portland, St.Albans and Kent either are, or will be modified to enable them to embark Merlin helicopters. All Type 45 destroyers will be capable of embarking Merlin.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to deploy the Merlin ASW helicopter on the CVF; and if he will make a statement. [201643]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Aircraft Carrier (CVF) will be a versatile platform, and will operate a number of aircraft types in a variety of roles. Whilst it will be capable of operating the Merlin Mk1 helicopter, it is too early to say specifically what our plans will be for this aircraft's deployment on CVF.

Parachute Pay

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* airmen in the Royal Air Force are in receipt of parachute pay. [201000]

Mr. Ingram: On 26 November 2004, there were approximately 20 officers and 90 airmen in the Royal Air Force in receipt of parachute pay.

Royal Navy Operations

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the merits of the policy of moving Royal Navy operations from open seas to a littoral environment; and if he will make a statement. [202790]

Mr. Ingram: The shift in emphasis in Royal Navy operations from the open seas towards the littoral was assessed by the Secretary of State for Defence in April this year when he endorsed the Future Navy paper, which set out the Navy Board's rolling strategic vision for the navy of the future. This has the concept of a versatile maritime force (VMF) at its core, and the paper describes, in conjunction with its sister paper the Future Maritime Operational Concept, how the VMF will play an increasingly effective role in meeting the core maritime roles, including influencing events ashore through maritime force projection using maritime strike and littoral manoeuvre. Flexible global reach, allowing achievement of early, rapid and sustainable effect, will also continue to be a core maritime role.

Sonar 2087

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which type-23 frigates will be fitted with Sonar 2087; and what the expected date of installation is in each case. [201636]

Mr. Ingram: On current plans eight of the Royal Navy's Type 23 frigates will be fitted with the 2087 sonar system. It has already been fitted to HMS Westminster and will be installed on the seven remaining vessels during their next available upkeep periods. The currently planned start dates for these upkeep periods, which are subject to periodic review, are:

Ship	*Upkeep start date*
HMS Northumberland	Under way
HMS Richmond	March 2005
HMS Somerset	April 2006
HMS St. Albans	May 2007
HMS Sutherland	July 2007
HMS Kent	January 2010
HMS Portland	November 2010

Surface Combatant Maritime Rotacraft

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to ensure Royal Navy *(a)* frigates and *(b)* destroyers are equipped with embarked helicopters prior to the in-service date for the surface combatant maritime rotacraft; and if he will make a statement. [201631]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy frigates and destroyers will continue to be equipped as necessary with Lynx Mk3/8 or Merlin Mk1 as embarked helicopters until a replacement for the Lynx Mk3/8 is delivered under our future helicopter programme.

Trident

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what plans his Department has for a replacement for the Trident missile system; and if he will make a statement; [203133]

(2) what research is being undertaken by his Department on possible replacements for the Trident submarine fleet; and if he will make a statement. [203134]

Mr. Hoon: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend on 28 October 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1371–72W.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans the Government has for *(a)* renewing and *(b)* replacing the Trident weapons system; and if he will make a statement. [203812]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 3.11 of the 2003 Defence White Paper (Cm 6041–1).

Type 45 Destroyers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the planned eight type-45 destroyers will replace the eight remaining type-42s on a one-for-one basis; and whether any of the remaining type-42s will be decommissioned before its successor type-45 enters service. [201637]

Mr. Ingram: The Secretary of State for Defence announced on 21 July 2004 that the oldest type 42 Destroyers, HMS Cardiff, HMS Newcastle and HMS Glasgow will be decommissioned by the end of 2005. While our future capability requirements are no longer dictated by the procurement of like for like platforms, the remaining type 42s are currently scheduled to be withdrawn from service from the type 45 First of Class in service date and then at intervals staged to match the in service date of incoming type-45 destroyers.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he expect the type-45–08 to become fully operational. [201639]

Mr. Ingram: In July 2004 the Secretary of State for Defence announced plans for class of eight Type 45 Destroyers, six of which are currently on contract. Formal approval, and a subsequent order, for ships seven and eight will be sought at the appropriate time. On current plans we would expect those ships to enter service during the middle of the next decade.

Typhoon

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations his Department has made to the Greek Government regarding the export of Typhoon aircraft. [202989]

Mr. Ingram: The proposal to export Typhoon aircraft to Greece is being led by Germany and the United Kingdom is playing a full part in supporting it as a Typhoon partner nation. In recent years this has included meetings and correspondence at both senior official and ministerial level.

Uniforms

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many uniforms were contracted to be delivered under the contract with Cooneen, Watts & Stone for the supply of camouflage uniforms; and how many have been delivered. [199537]

Mr. Ingram: The contract for Cut & Sewn Garments covers a wide range of items, many of which, including combat clothing, are not due to commence delivery until early 2005. The number of uniforms to be delivered under this contract will vary item by item, and the exact quantities will not be determined until the Department raises warrants to meet the armed forces' requirements during the five-year period of the contract.

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what penalties are included in the contract with Cooneen, Watts & Stone for failure to deliver on time. [199538]

Mr. Ingram: Penalties are not enforceable under English Law. The prime contractor has the incentive to properly perform under this contract, as the full five-year duration is subject to continued satisfactory performance. The company is required to make alternative arrangements if there is a risk of delivery failure. However, should they still fail to deliver on time, remedies under the contract include the right to claim damages commensurate with any consequent loss suffered by the Department.

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what stocks of camouflage uniforms his Department holds. [199539]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence currently holds sufficient stocks of camouflage clothing to meet current and anticipated requirements for at least the next six months.

In addition to items issued to individuals, the following stock was held as at 30 November 2004:

Item	*Stock held*
Desert combat clothing	
Field jacket	2,705
Lightweight jacket	6,315
Lightweight trousers	17,386
Windproof trousers	770
Hat	9,303
Sweat rags	39,816
CS95 woodland clothing	
Lightweight trousers	75,975
Lightweight jacket	72,200
Field jacket	69,911
Hat	12,913

US Navy

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British subjects are employed by the US Navy operations in London. [202301]

Mr. Ingram: The US Navy employs 353 non-US nationals either as direct-hires or through contractors, in support of operations in London. Their regulations require only that all employees in the UK hold legal work permits therefore they are unable to confirm that all employed are British subjects.

PRIME MINISTER

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* oral and *(b)* written reports he received on the morning of 7 September 2002 from the International Atomic Energy Agency concerning Iraq's weapons capability. [202919]

The Prime Minister: I received no reports from the IAEA on the morning of 7 September 2002 concerning Iraq's weapons capability. While there was media reporting at the time of UN officials having identified new construction and other unexplained changes at several nuclear related sites in Iraq, this was subsequently denied by the IAEA.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on recent talks with the Iraqi Prime Minister concerning progress in Iraq. [202966]

The Prime Minister: I recently agreed with the Iraqi Prime Minister the importance of holding elections according to the agreed January timetable as well as ensuring the broadest possible participation by all Iraqis. We also reviewed progress in the Iraqi Interim Government's strategy for ensuring security for the elections.

I also refer my hon. Friend to the Press Conference I held with Prime Minister Allawi on 19 September 2004, which is available on the Number 10 website.

Ministerial Committees

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister for what reason the Environment Secretary has no place on *(a)* the Ministerial Committees on Defence and Overseas policy and *(b)* the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Relations with the United States. [202108]

The Prime Minister: On 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 104WS, I announced the current list of Cabinet Committees and sub-committees, their membership and terms of reference. Other Ministers and officials can be invited to meetings of Ministerial Committees when necessary.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Colombia

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what mechanisms are in place to ensure that UK Government assistance to Colombia excludes the funding of government-sponsored agencies or groups that are known human rights abusers. [203115]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID no longer has any government-to-government bilateral projects in Colombia. Our last project, in the agricultural sector, ended in 2003 and was consistent with the United Nations (UN) human rights recommendations.

DFID's support to Colombia now takes the form of our contribution to multilateral agencies working in Colombia, in particular the European Commission's (EC) development assistance, and direct support to non-governmental organisations through the Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF). The EC has made clear its support for the UN's human rights recommendation. In designing projects it takes account of the need to avoid funds being used in a way that would not be compliant with UN human rights recommendations. The CSCF only supports UK based organisations working in partnership with local civil society organisations.

The British Government also ensure the reliability and probity of those in receipt of UK military assistance. DFID uses the best information available to assure ourselves that Colombian authorities benefiting from UK assistance are not engaged in activities that violate human rights, aid internal repression or are in collusion with paramilitary organisations. This includes personal interviews and background checks. We keep in close contact with the activities concerned to maintain this assurance throughout the duration of any project.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201695]

Hilary Benn: DFID does not advertise in any religious media, although we have trialled the use of various ethnic minority publications. In the interests of fair and open competition all our external vacancies are advertised on our website and in media aimed at targeting the broadest readership from all parts of the community.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [200859]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The energy costs of the DFID UK estate over the last two years have been as follows:

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Electricity	258,886	290,160
Heating fuels	60,226	65,698
Total	319,112	355,858

DFID energy costs have increased by 11 per cent. This is mainly due to additional consumption as a result of our East Kilbride office being refurbished during this period.

DFID has established Environmental Management Systems in it's UK offices and is not only actively monitoring energy utilisation but also considering, on an on-going basis, any opportunities to further improve energy efficiency measures.

Information on energy costs for our overseas offices is not centrally available and could not be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in each of the last two years. [200862]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: No costs have been incurred in refurbishing ministerial private offices in the last two years.

Displaced Persons (Burma)

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department is taking to ensure that ethnic minorities in Burma *(a)* are protected from violence and *(b)* have access to humanitarian assistance. [202863]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Many of the most vulnerable people in Burma live in the border regions. In order to help them directly, DFID is funding work to provide assistance and protection, including giving support to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and other international and national non-governmental organisations. DFID has also recently agreed to work with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the expansion of its grassroots assistance programme into more of the ethnic minority areas.

At the same time, the UK is working to ensure that human rights issues, including the protection of ethnic minority people, are raised with the Burmese authorities. The UK has been a strong supporter of the work of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Sergio Pinheiro, and the work of the United

Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative, Razali Ismail., Along with EU partners, the UK is working hard to ensure that human rights in Burma are fully addressed at this year's United Nations General Assembly.

EU Directives

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [200871]

Hilary Benn: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only by incurring a disproportionate cost. DFID does not hold information on the costs of implementation to public funds or businesses.

Food Aid (Southern Africa)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps *(a)* his Department and *(b)* other donors are taking to source food aid for southern Africa from local suppliers. [202854]

Hilary Benn: DFID is conscious of the adverse impact of food aid on local economies. DFID's support for World Food Programme (WFP) operations has been accompanied by pressure to programme food aid in ways that minimise disincentives for local production, and that will not disrupt local food markets. DFID, and other like-minded donors, have consistently called for better targeting and monitoring mechanisms and for increases in regional and local procurement of food.

The WFP has recognised and acted upon these concerns in southern Africa. In the last year the WFP procured more than 100,000 metric tonnes of food from Zambia for use in its operations in the region. In another example, DFID's support for food aid operations in Mozambique last year was based on locally procured supplies, ensuring that competitively priced surplus grain in the north was sourced for food aid needs in the south.

DFID is supporting the WFP's efforts to strengthen food market analysis in their emergency needs assessments. DFID is are complementing this by building on our support for national Vulnerability Assessment Committees to enable them to undertake more detailed food market assessments.

Liberia

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department is giving to Liberia, with particular reference to farmers who grow rubber. [203069]

Hilary Benn: Over the last year, in Liberia, DFID has contributed £3 million to The United Nations Trust Fund for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, and £1 million to UNICEF for education and reintegration projects for child ex-combatants. DFID has allocated £10.6 million in humanitarian aid, focusing on the emergency reactivation of community-based services. DFID is providing consultancy support on public administration reform to the Governance Reform Commission, and have commissioned a report on the justice sector, with a view to possible assistance. DFID's share of the European Union's reconstruction programmes is approximately £7.5 million and have seconded a governance advisor to the EU office in Monrovia.

DFID does not provide support to rubber farmers. However, the European Union's Local Community Development Programme, which supports small projects, includes support for small rubber plantations.

Malawi

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to establish a long-term recovery and development strategy to combat food shortages in Malawi. [202819]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is supporting the Government of Malawi, directly and through the European Union (EU), to remedy problems of chronic and acute hunger. We are supporting development of the Government's new National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. This builds on experience in Ethiopia and Zambia in order to tackle the underlying causes of chronic food insecurity by raising agricultural productivity and providing more efficient safety nets. Other measures include the Food-Nutrition Security Information System and the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee that co-ordinates action.

The Government of Malawi also wants to diversify its economy so as to create more paid employment. DFID and the EU are supporting Government policies that will improve the environment for private sector investment by lowering inflation and interest rates, reviewing the tax regime and cracking down on corruption. DFID support includes poverty reducing budget support and support to the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

To address acute food shortages affecting 1.3 million Malawians this year, DFID and the EU are supporting humanitarian food aid. DFID's contribution is £5 million. This aid will also help prevent the decline in livelihoods over the longer-term that is associated with such crises.

Northern Cyprus

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on EU aid to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. [201330]

Mr. MacShane: I have been asked to reply.

The Government strongly supports EU efforts to end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots and assist the economic development of northern Cyprus. At the request of the General Affairs Council of EU Foreign Ministers, the Commission has produced a regulation to disburse 259 million euros of aid to northern Cyprus. This regulation, along with a regulation enabling direct preferential trade between the north and the EU, has yet to be agreed. The Government strongly supports the EU

Presidency in their determination to agree these two regulations and to fulfil the Council mandate to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202254]

Hilary Benn: Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 DFID's special advisers made the following trips in an official capacity with the Secretary of State for International Development:

Trip details (date, destination, purpose etc.)	*Number of special advisers*	*Approximate cost to DFID for travel and incidentals (actual cost details are not held centrally for the dates requested) (£)*
Rwanda/Uganda/Kenya, 30 July-1 August 2003	1	3,690
World Bank and IMF Annual Meetings, Dubai, 21–23 September 2003	1	3,250
New York (United Nations meetings), 28–31 October 2003	1	3,150
7–11 February 2004, Ethiopia bilateral visit	1	1,900
Approximate total for period 31 March 2003–31 March 2004		11,990

Both special advisers have attended occasional conferences within the UK (eg Wilton Park) in their official capacity; the costs of these have been minimal.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203777]

Hilary Benn: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all overseas visits undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. On an annual basis, the Government have also published the costs of Ministers' visits overseas. Copies are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for earlier years and for official travel before 2001 could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost and in some cases will no longer be held.

In 2001–02 and 2002–03, figures for travel by DFID officials were £2.19 million and £2.32 million respectively. For the same periods, figures for ministerial and special adviser travel were £0.17 million and £0.32 million respectively. It is not possible to disaggregate ministerial and special adviser travel without incurring disproportionate cost.

In 2003–04, DFID introduced new procedures to draw together administration costs, including those travel costs which had previously been recorded on country programme budgets. These changes have improved transparency and management of administration costs, but mean that figures from 2003–04 now include travel costs that were previously funded by country programmes and as a result are not comparable with earlier years. For 2003–04, the figure for official travel was £10.41 million, and £0.27 million for ministerial and special adviser travel.

All official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules contained in DFID's staff handbook. All ministerial and special adviser travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

14. **David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made towards implementing the European Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive into UK law. [203428]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government have recently completed a consultation on draft implementing Regulations and draft guidance for the waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. The Government are considering carefully the views expressed by respondents and in the light of these I and my ministerial colleagues will decide on the final Regulations and guidance.

World Trade Organisation

15. **Ann McKechin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the progress of the negotiations at the World Trade Organisation. [203429]

Ms Hewitt: Negotiations in Geneva on the Doha Development Agenda since the agreement of Frameworks at the end of July have been progressing smoothly. Negotiations are currently focused on clearing away the technical undergrowth, which is essential to allow substantial progress to be made by the Sixth WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in December 2005.

Internet Scams

16. **Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received about dial-up internet scams; and if she will make a statement. [203430]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has received around 145 written representations about such scams in the past calendar year.

In the summer the Government asked Ofcom to undertake a review of the regulation of premium rate services (prs), the abuse of which has led to some consumers falling victim to dial-up internet scams. The report has been published today and contains a set of recommendations to reduce the scope for consumer harm. The recommendations will, when implemented, tighten up the regulatory regime giving the regulator, ICSTIS, more powers to act more quickly against those abusing the prs payment mechanism. They will improve the likelihood of consumers being able to get their money back where they are the subject of a prs fraud. They will also ensure that consumers are better informed of how to avoid being the victim of prs fraud. The review recommendations include:

Telecoms network providers should not make payments to service providers offering prs for at least 30 days. This will give the regulator ICSTIS sufficient time to assess complaints and fraudulent activity. These payments should also be frozen during any additional investigation that is necessary and if necessary for a further three monthhs after an investigation is complete to fund any customer refunds that ICSTIS concludes are appropriate.

The ICSTIS Code should require network providers to better support ICSTIS by providing detailed information on the identity of those companies offering prs, by taking all reasonable steps to ensure that information is accurate and by providing ICSTIS with call traffic and revenues data when complaints have been received. All this information will make it easier for ICSTIS to identify and act against those that abuse prs.

The ICSTIS Code should require companies offering prs to have effective customer service and refund policies in place. Telecoms providers should be required to make practical information on prs available to their customers, including information on how to bar prs calls and how to protect themselves when using internet dialler services.

The Department, Ofcom and ICSTIS will now form a Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of these recommendations as soon as possible. However the implementation process will take some months to complete as a number of the recommendations will require changes to both the ICSTIS Code and to the Ofcom general conditions of entitlement both of which require full public consultation. There is also a requirement for an EU consultation on changes to the ICSTIS Code which we plan to carry out in parallel with the domestic consultation processes.

Until the recommendations can be implemented the emphasis should be on ICSTIS continuing to use the powers that it has to take enforcement action against those that abuse the prs charging mechanism and on raising consumer awareness of how they can best protect themselves from prs fraud.

Loan Sharks

17. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proposals she has to limit the activities of loan sharks. [203431]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The DTI have funded a pilot project to tackle illegal loan sharks in the Trading Standards areas of the West Midlands and Glasgow. Dedicated teams in each area run the two year pilot, which began in September and is progressing well.

Through the Consumer Credit Bill, the Government will also increase protection for consumers in the regulated credit market.

Manufacturing Industry

18. **Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact on manufacturing industry of the recent rise in gas prices. [203433]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department is monitoring closely the impact of rising gas prices on British manufacturing. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is meeting representatives of industry today, and I have met two large chemical companies, to address their concerns in this area.

The increases are in the main a result of market forces and follow a period in which gas prices have generally been at historically low levels in real terms. The UK has the most competitive energy market in the EU and industrial electricity and gas prices have been among the lowest in the EU over the last few years.

Asbestos Claims

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many asbestos claims her Department estimates it will receive from former employees of *(a)* British Ship Builders and *(b)* British Coal. [202843]

Nigel Griffiths: I am advised that forecasting future claims is difficult. The volume of asbestos claims for British Ship Builders has been rising. It is estimated that there would be 3,000 to 5,000 future claims.

With regard to employment with British Coal, I am advised that asbestos claims are a very small part of the overall compensation and no future forecast has been made. In the 12 month period, from 1 October 2003, 84 asbestos related claims were received.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average compensation payment made to former employees of British Ship Builders diagnosed to be suffering a pleural plaque has been. [202844]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The average compensation payment made to former British Shipbuilders suffering from pleural plaques is around £6,700.

Coalminers' Compensation (Bassetlaw)

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individuals from Bassetlaw have submitted claims under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme. [203285]

Nigel Griffiths: *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* The answer is as follows:

8,833 respiratory disease claims and 4,878 Vibration White Finger claims have been submitted by claimants in Bassetlaw under the British Coal Health Schemes.

The information is complied in the middle of the month and shows the figures for the end of the previous month.

Note:

Constituency figures can be found on the Department's website www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth

Cold Calling

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what definition she has used to assess vulnerable people in the context of proposals to ban cold calling or doorstep selling. [203215]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No such definition has been used. The recent public consultation has been conducted as widely as possible but has included organisations representing sectors of the public often thought to be vulnerable in the context of cold calling and doorstep selling.

The consultation did not put forward the option of an outright ban but invited views on a ban on cold calling to offer property services "with possible necessary exceptions".

Companies Act

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what estimate she has made of the amount paid into court pursuant to the provisions of section 430(11) of the Companies Act 1985 in the last year for which figures are available; and what use the Government has made of these funds. [202142]

Jacqui Smith: The last year for which figures are available is that to 31 October 2004. Between November 2003 and the end of October 2004 there were approximately 25 cases where payments were made into court under the provisions of section 430 (11) of the Companies Act 1985. Payments into court involved approximately 7,550 individual dissentient shareholdings with an approximate total value of £1.5 million.

The funds are invested with the National Debt Commissioners as directed by the Administration of Justice Act 1982.

Migrant Workers

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget is for the Working Lives Institute's research project on migrant workers commissioned by the East of England Development Agency; what demand there has been for such research; and for what purpose the research results will be used. [201959]

Jacqui Smith: The total budget for the Working Lives Institute research project on migrant workers is £97,242.

The demand for the study has come from the East of England Regional Assembly, Government Departments, the Trades Union Congress and Keystone Development—a community and voluntary group who work with migrant workers.

The purpose of the study is to provide information about the migrant worker population in the East of England which will inform public policy interventions in areas such as health, housing and education.

Electricity/Gas Prices

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the implications for *(a)* household consumers and *(b)* industrial users of the change in the price of (i) electricity and (ii) gas since 1997. [203427]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Domestic electricity prices at the end of 2004 will still be about 10 per cent. below the 1997 level in real terms, and domestic gas price increases this year will mean prices return to around their 1997 levels in real terms.

Industrial electricity prices in 2004 are also still below their 1997 levels.

Industrial gas prices in 2003 were already above 1997 levels, but even with the increases in 2004, they are still likely to be below the average over the last 30 years.

Fraudulent Mail

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what discussions she has had with consumer groups about misleading letters sent through the post to people suggesting that they have won prizes; and if she will make a statement. [202955]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I took part in the event to launch the Trading Standard's Institute's National Consumer Week in October. Themes for the week included misleading mailings.

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) have taken a lead within Europe in taking action against bogus prize draws and lotteries under new powers provided by the Injunctions Directive and the Enterprise Act 2002 ("Stop Now Orders").

Fuel Prices

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact on UK manufacturing competitiveness of increased fuel prices. [201646]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is monitoring closely developments in the UK gas market and the recent increase in the wholesale price of gas. Ofgem has now announced its conclusions on its investigation into gas price increases in 2003 and 2004. It has concluded that the main causes of rising UK gas prices are high oil prices feeding into gas prices and declining UK gas supplies. Ofgem is taking two courses of action. It is asking the European Commission to put more resources into making gas competition work, and is continuing to examine why some UK gas supplies did not reach the market.

While the cost of gas to industry has been rising recently, this should be seen in the context of historical trends. In real terms gas prices for industrial users in 2003 were nearly 30 per cent. below their level in 1990 and well below their average over the last 30 years.

Electricity prices have increased mainly as a result of the rise in gas prices and the recovery in wholesale prices from unsustainably low levels in 2002. Industrial electricity prices in 2003 were nearly 50 per cent. below their 1990 levels. Even after the latest increases we expect prices to remain competitive with those of our major EU competitors.

The Department has recently published a report by Oxford Economic Research Associates which concluded that the UK has the most competitive energy markets in Europe. The report is available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/gas_and_electricity/competitiveness_structure/psa_final.pdf

Mersey Docks and Harbour Company

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what prerogatives of the previous Mersey Docks and Harbour Board over the Mersey Littoral were transferred to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company on its privatisation. [202724]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

When the Mersey Docks and Harbour Act 1971 reconstituted the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board as a statutory public company, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, on 27 July 1971. Section 8 (1) stated that the duty of the Company shall be:

"*(a)* to take such action as it considers necessary or desirable for or incidental to the

maintenance, operation and improvement of-

(i) the docks; and

(ii) the conservancy of the port of Liverpool (other than the docks) and the approaches thereto;

(b) to administer the pilotage services of the Liverpool pilotage district under the

Liverpool Pilotage Order 1920."

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she is taking to ensure fair payment of compensation to coal health claimants. [203424]

Nigel Griffiths: Compensation is paid in accordance with the claims handling agreements negotiated with the miners' solicitors. The Department pays for solicitors to advise claimants on the offers made to them to ensure they are fair and appropriate.We have paid out over £2.3 billion on the two main schemes.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much her Department paid to lawyers for their work in contesting the coal miners chronic obstructive pulmonary disease case *(a)* up to and *(b)* since the date of the appeal court judgment in the matter in respect of work dealing with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and vibration white finger. [202840]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The Department of Trade and Industry assumed liability for British Coal Corporation health claims from 20 December 1997. Prior to that date British Coal Corporation was responsible for its own legal costs. There have been a number of judgment dates in relation to the coal health litigations and the Department is not therefore able to provide a breakdown of pre and post appeal court judgment.

With regard to costs paid to the claimants solicitors group, the Department is required to negotiate their generic costs on an ongoing basis and to date the sum of £7.8 million (including VAT and disbursements) has been paid for the period December 1997 to April 2002. This does not include trial costs.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average settlement value was of *(a)* chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and *(b)* vibration white finger cases at the last date for which figures are available; and what assessment she has made of the time it will take to complete all the cases under both schemes. [202842]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* *(a)* The average damages for Respiratory Disease on fully settled claims is £7,326. Based on the current flow of claims the last claim is likely to be settled in 2011. However, as the hon. Member is aware, Sir Michael Turner, the judge who oversees the respiratory disease litigation, is currently reviewing proposals for the speeding up of the claims process. Sir Michael has asked the parties to return to court on 21 December for him to review their proposals. Once Sir Michael has made his ruling we will be in a better position to consider an aspirational end date for the processing of claims.

(b) The average general damages figure for vibration white finger is:

	£
VWF—General damages	8,119
VWF—Services[1]	8,490
VWF—Total	8,628

[1] VWF Services average settlement value is derived from the services part of the settlement only, i.e. excludes any General Damages.

Note:

Average settlement values for COPD and VWF are derived from claims settled by payment and exclude denied withdrawn claims as of 31 October 2004.

We hope to have completed all offers for VWF general damages (apart from outstanding group three claims) by the end of 2004, and all claims settled by the end of 2005. For Services we hope to complete all medicals by the end of 2006 and to settle all Services claims by 2007.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid in fees to *(a)* Richmonds solicitors, *(b)* Rayleys solicitors and *(c)* the Union of Democratic Mineworkers for vibration white finger and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease claims under the coalminers' compensation scheme. [202699]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 21 November 2004 the figures are:

Solicitor	*Total Solicitors Costs £ million*
Richmonds	0.2
Raleys	34
Union of Democratic Mineworkers	11

Note:
Solicitor's costs include VAT on solicitor's profit costs and disbursements, but exclude generic costs paid to solicitors involved in the setting up of the scheme and review of its operation.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases have been submitted by Richmonds solicitors for compensation for vibration white finger and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease under the coalminers' compensation scheme. [202700]

Nigel Griffiths: Richmond solicitors have submitted 171 respiratory disease claims and 267 Vibration White Finger claims under the British Coal health schemes.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, when she expects to receive the opinion of the European Commission on the legality of providing state aid to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [202814]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: On 1 December The European Commission announced a formal investigation into the UK Government's notification in December 2003 of aid to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. Under EC law the investigation can take up to 18 months. My officials will work closely with the Commission services to reach a positive outcome within this timeframe.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what discussions she has had with the European Commission on state funding issues with regard to the financing of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority *(a)* before and *(b)* after the passing of the Energy Act 2004; and if she will make a statement. [203070]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In December 2003 the UK formally notified the European Commission of its intention to support the creation of the NDA. Since then officials and officials in the UK Permanent Representation in Brussels have been in close contact with Commission services. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, also discussed the matter with former Competition Commissioner Monti.

Most recently we have been in contact with the Commission to discuss the transitional arrangements under which the NDA will start work on 1 April 2005. They have confirmed in their press notice announcing the start of their formal investigation into aid to the NDA that these arrangements do not involve state aid.

We will continue to work closely with the Commission during its investigation.

Premium Rate Telephone Calls

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with BT about the triggering of premium rate numbers through the internet. [203207]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has had extensive discussions with BT about the triggering of premium rate numbers through the internet. The outcome of consultations with ICSTIS are being announced today

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations she has received in the last three months about telephone calls unwittingly triggered through the internet to premium rate numbers; and how many of these involved children. [203208]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has received 74 representations about such calls in the last three months. Ten of these involved children.

Chemistry Department (Exeter University)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on science research of the closure of the chemistry department at Exeter university; and if he will make a statement. [200634]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply. It is too early to early to make a detailed assessment of the impact on science research as a result of the proposed closure of Exeter's chemistry department. However, the quality of chemistry research in English universities has increased significantly. 50 per cent. of departments were rated five or five* in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) compared with only 20 per cent. in 1996. 27 per cent. were rated four as compared with 23 per cent. in 1996. Overall the UK currently ranks fourth in the world for the number and share of world citations in physical sciences.

I have asked HEFCE to advise me on higher education subjects or courses of national strategic importance, including science subjects, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them. HEFCE will be entering into a strategic dialogue with universities, colleges, employers and other partners to consider this matter.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Local Government Pension Scheme

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 125W, on the Local Government Pension Scheme, for what reason the amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme to remove provisions that allow some scheme members to retire with unreduced pension benefits before the age of 65 years will come into effect before the consultation on the full scheme is completed. [203728]

Phil Hope: The proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme are designed to amend the current Scheme, from 1 April 2005, to reflect pension policy regarding retirement age and to help stabilise employers' costs. The consultation exercise which began on 4 October is the first step in a longer term exercise to devise a new and modernised Scheme for the future which will build on the principles of affordability and sustainability being achieved by earlier regulatory changes. It is programmed to take effect in 2008.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session [199642]

Phil Hope *[pursuant to the reply, 29 November 2004, Official Report, c. 41WJ:* It was not possible to provide a substantive answer to four questions prior to the prorogation of Parliament. Those questions were answered on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 35WS, in accordance with the arrangements announced by the Leader of the House in a written ministerial statement.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many written questions for his Office were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201544]

Phil Hope: None.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Office since its implementation; [201273]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Office between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201367]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W, by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Ruth Kelly).

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Women Prisoners

23. **Julie Morgan:** To ask the Minister for Women To ask the Minister for Womenwhat assessment she has made of the effects of the imprisonment of women on their families. [203438]

Jacqui Smith: The Prison Service recognises the importance of maintaining family ties while a mother is in prison.

There is a package of measures to assist in mitigating the effects of imprisonment, such as Intermittent Custody, training for new prison officers and for those who are working specifically with women, to better understand the issues.

IT Industry

25. **David Taylor:** To ask the Minister for Women what recent assessment has been made of the need to recruit more women into the IT industry. [203440]

Jacqui Smith: The Government will continue to support a number of initiatives, including the information technology degree by e-Skills UK (the Sector Skills Council for IT sector) to encourage girls to seek careers in information technology. We are working with employers to address the situation by encouraging flexible working practices. The new Resource Centre for Women in SET will make working with employers in this area one of their top priorities.

Employment (City of York)

26. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Minister for Women To ask the Minister for Womenhow many women have paid jobs in the City of York parliamentary constituency; and how many had paid jobs in 1997. [203441]

Ms Hewitt: The number of women employed in the City of York is 39,234 out of a female working population of 47,300. I am pleased to note that unemployment is now at a 25 year low.

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on the progress towards a Commission for Equality and Human Rights. [203434]

Jacqui Smith: We will be introducing legislation in this Session to create a Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The policies underpinning the legislation, which will allow the Commission to champion equality, diversity and human rights, and promote good relations between communities, were published on 18 November in the Government Response to the "Fairness for All" White Paper consultation.

Work-life Balance

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Minister for Women what plans she has to offer advice on work-life balance issues to women in work. [203439]

Ms Hewitt: The Women and Equality Unit published "Advancing Women in the Workplace" a good practice booklet for employers on how to improve the position of women at work, which covers work-life balance policies. The Department also provides a wealth of guidance around maternity law and best practice.

TRANSPORT

A21

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he will announce his preferred route for the A21 from Robertsbridge to Flimwell; and if he will make a statement [203697]

Mr. Jamieson: It was anticipated that a decision would be made on this scheme earlier in the year but it was found that further detailed appraisal was necessary. That said, the new procedures recently announced will mean that further progress is subject to regional priorities.

Bus Lanes

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of bus lanes have been built in each year since 1997. [201607]

Mr. Darling: The total length of bus lanes built in England for the financial years 2001–02 to 2003–04 are shown in the following table. Figures are not available for years prior to 2001–02.

	Miles
2001–02	37
2002–03	67
2003–04	81

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money was raised through fines from cars driving in bus lanes in each year since 1997; and to what uses such funds are put. [201608]

Mr. Darling: My Department does not collect data on the amount of fine income from bus lane enforcement. In London, bus lane enforcement is the joint responsibility of Transport for London and London boroughs, and under the London Local Authorities Act 1996 any surplus income from enforcement of bus lanes must be used for transport purposes. Outside London, responsibility for bus lane enforcement currently rest with the police. Any fines for misuse of bus lanes which they impose are reported within the general offence type "neglect of traffic directions" and separate information is not therefore available.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average usage rates for bus lanes were in each year since 1997. [201609]

Mr. Darling: Although there is no data on bus lane use nationally, there is evidence of increasing patronage on guided bus ways. Patronage has generally increased on the five routes where guided bus ways have been introduced. For instance, the Ipswich route has seen journeys increase by 75 per cent. between 1995 and 2001.

Bus Services

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his latest estimate is of the level of the total financial support from each English county council for bus services in each year from 1997 to 2005; and if he will make a statement. [199900]

Charlotte Atkins: A table has been placed in the Libraries of the House, which show figures for the financial support for the provision of bus services by all local passenger transport authorities from 1997–98 to 2002–03. This information has been taken from local authority and Passenger Transport Authority administrative returns. Figures for actual or estimated expenditure by local authorities beyond March 2003 are not yet available.

Local authorities also provide capital funding for infrastructure used by bus services and concessionary fares reimbursement to bus operators.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the subsidy given to bus services in England in each year from 1997 was spent in *(a)* London and *(b)* the rest of England. [201606]

Mr. Darling: The following table shows the total amount of bus subsidy provided by local authorities outside London, spending by Transport for London/ London Regional Transport on bus services in London net of fare income, and concessionary fare and BSOG payments in London and outside London.

	£ millions adjusted to 2003-04 prices			*Percentage*		
	London	*Other England*	*Total*	*London*	*Other England*	*Total*
1997–98	162	720	882	18	82	100
1998–99	181	770	950	19	81	100
1999–00	190	820	1010	19	81	100
2000–01	267	878	1145	23	77	100
2001–02	389	868	1257	31	69	100
2002–03	632	848	1480	43	57	100
2003–04(p)	772	908	1680	46	54	100

Outside London, subsidy for local bus services consists of tendered services supported by local authorities (which includes funding provided under the Rural and Urban Bus Challenge Schemes and Rural Bus Subsidy Grant), Concessionary Fare Reimbursement for older people, disabled people and children (where child concessions are funded by the local authority), and Bus Service Operators Grant claimed by operators from DfT (formerly Fuel Duty Rebate). Local authorities make their own decisions on the level of public transport revenue support and—subject to a statutory minimum—concessionary fare schemes.

In London, the level of support for London buses has been a matter for the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL) since July 2000. Prior to this date, responsibility rested with London Regional Transport (LRT). The Mayor/TfL make their own decisions about how much to spend in support of London bus services, funded by both fare income and a single block grant from Government covering all TfL responsibilities. London boroughs continue to be responsible for concessionary fare reimbursement. Bus Service Operators Grant is paid direct to the operators of London Bus Services by DfT.

Sources of the data are the Greater London Authority, local government returns to ODPM, and DfT records of Bus Service Operators Grant. Data for 2003–04 from ODPM are budget estimates.

Cycling

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of cyclists who wore protective headgear in the latest period for which figures are available, broken down by age. [203903]

Mr. Jamieson: Cycle helmet wearing rate surveys are regularly carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory. The latest in 2002 shows:

Cycle helmet wearing rate on major built up roads in 2002

	Percentage
All	25.1
Adults	25.7
Children	15.3

We continue to monitor wearing rates—a new survey was carried out in 2004 and it is hoped to publish the report in 2005.

Deaths (Drink-Driving)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many deaths associated with drink-driving were reported in Coventry last year. [201815]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* Estimates of deaths associated with drink driving are not made for individual local authorities.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons a person who gets divorced and remarries must supply to the DVLA their divorce papers in addition to their marriage certificate. [203698]

Mr. Jamieson: DVLA is required to examine original documents when it receives an application for a first photocard driving licence. Submission of a current passport in the name to be shown on the licence is the best option as this is clear proof that identity has been examined in full by the issuing authority. Where this is not possible DVLA reserves the right to call for sufficient documentation to establish a link across any, and all, change(s) of name which might have occurred. In certain cases this might involve requests for submission of divorce papers.

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202398]

Charlotte Atkins: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Minister's public engagements.

Ferry Services

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which rules determine the ferry services operating within UK domestic waters for which the checking of boarding cards or tickets is mandatory or is to become mandatory. [200981]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* A number of domestic ferry operators are currently regulated under the Aviation and Maritime Security Act 1990 (AMSA). Those ferry services currently regulated under AMSA were asked in March 2003 to put in place a package of enhanced security measures, including all foot and vehicle passengers having their boarding cards or tickets checked on entry to the ship.

My Department is currently conducting a review of the UK's domestic passenger security regime, as part of the risk assessment of all domestic maritime operations required under EU Regulation 725/2004. For some passenger operations, access control and checking boarding passes may form part of the package of security measures required of operators. However this is still under consideration as part of this review.

London Borough Councils (Transport)

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the responsibilities for transport of London borough councils; and what plans he has to alter those responsibilities. [201603]

Mr. Darling: Under the GLA Act 1999, London borough councils fulfil the following transport roles:

(1) the highway and traffic authority for all roads, other than the roads within the GLA road network and motorways within London;

(2) the concessionary fares scheme for the elderly and disabled; and

(3) to implement the Mayor of London's transport strategy in their areas.

I refer the hon. Member to my answers given to him on 10 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 715W, with regards to plans to change these responsibilities.

Mersey Crossing

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce the timetable for the construction of the new proposed Mersey Crossing. [201927]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Halton borough council recently submitted to my Department a revised appraisal of the proposed New Mersey Crossing. We expect to announce a decision on the proposed scheme during 2005. It is not possible to indicate any timetable for construction at this stage.

Northern Cyprus (Direct Air Links)

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the establishment of direct air links from the UK to Ercan airport in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. [201332]

Charlotte Atkins: After statements of support made earlier this year from both the United Nations and the European Union to end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots, the Government are looking at measures they might be able to take and the possibility of direct air services between the UK and the northern part of Cyprus is one of the options being considered.

Office of Rail Regulation

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to appoint a new Chief Executive of the Office of Rail Regulation. [201602]

Mr. Darling: Under the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, it is the responsibility of the Office of Rail Regulation to appoint a Chief Executive having consulted the Secretary of State. In October the Office appointed Keith Webb as Chief Executive, for a period of at least nine months and up to a year by agreement. The Office plans to start the process of recruiting a successor in the new year.

Passenger Safety

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve safety and security of passengers *(a)* on trains and *(b)* at railway stations. [200052]

Mr. McNulty: The personal security of passengers is the responsibility of the rail industry. Re-franchising provides an opportunity for Government to buy improvements were appropriate to station and train environments, CCTV, staffing and other personal security issues. For example the recently awarded Greater Anglia franchise requires the franchisee to gain Secure Station accreditation at its worst stations and Secured Car Park awards at its worst station car parks. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) can also be built into franchise agreements in relation to station and car park security, station environment and the on train environment. If the train operator falls below a set benchmark enforcement action can be taken.

Industry led initiatives include Network Rail youth education programmes on trespass and graffiti, Special Constables and TravelSafe Officers sponsored by train operating companies. The British Transport Police is a specialist police force for the railways, largely funded by the rail industry but also receiving grants from Government for specific projects. The force has specialist skills which benefit the travelling public, including improving the safety of passengers and tackling antisocial behaviour.

Rail Safety and Standards Board

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to report the Rail Safety and Standards Board findings on the health and safety effects on rail passengers of crowding and standing on trains. [203722]

Mr. McNulty: The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) have informed me that they expect to publish the results from the first phase of their research project examining the health and safety effects of crowding in January 2005.

Recreational Boating Interests

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which recreational boating interests were consulted on the amendments to the original draft of the Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004. [199516]

Mr. Jamieson: Once the original draft of the Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004 had been finalised, a consultation exercise took place. Consultees for recreational boating interests included:

British Marine Equipment Association
British Marine Equipment Council
British Marine Industries Federation
International Sailing Federation
Royal Institute of Navigation
Royal National Lifeboat Institution
Royal Yachting Association.

Roads (East Anglia)

Mrs. Shephard: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the timetable is for the consultation by a regional transport body on the development of the dualling schemes for the *(a)* A47 and *(b)* A11 in Norfolk and Suffolk; [203706]

(2) which regional transport body will consult on the development of the *(a)* A47 and *(b)* A11 dualling schemes in Norfolk and Suffolk. [203707]

Charlotte Atkins: The timetable and detailed arrangements for the submission of advice to the Department from the region on the prioritisation of these schemes will be announced in due course and will be subject to the outcome of the current consultation about long term funding guidelines. Copies of the consultation document "Devolving decision making: A consultation on regional funding allocations' are available in the House Libraries.

Under the proposals in the document, the East of England Regional Assembly and the East of England Regional Development Agency would advise on the relative priority of these schemes alongside other transport proposals in the region and on the basis of long term regional funding guidelines. These bodies would be expected to consult widely within the region, including with local transport authorities, in framing their advice on priorities.

Shell Haven Port

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he will announce his decision on the Shell Haven Port inquiry. [203769]

Mr. Jamieson: A decision on the proposed port at Shell Haven will be announced when consideration of the inquiry inspector's report and all relevant issues has been completed.

South West Trains

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether the Strategic Rail Authority has determined

its response to the request from South West Trains regarding a temporary derogation to allow implementation of the 12 December timetable; [201600]

(2) what the maximum time period is for which a temporary derogation from the passenger service requirement can be given. [201601]

Mr. Darling: The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has completed its consultation concerning proposed Passenger Service Requirement (PSR) changes and anticipates the imminent issue of a temporary derogation to South West Trains in advance of 12 December 2004 to allow implementation of the revised timetable from that date. The SRA will not normally grant temporary derogations from the Passenger Service Requirement for more than the period of operation of two consecutive timetables (timetables usually cover a period of six months). Any variation to the PSR in excess of this time would be expected to be contractualised through a formal change to the PSR, in accordance with the procedures specified in the Directions and Guidance issued to the SRA.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201345]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201373]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W, by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Vehicle Registration

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he plans to introduce an annual charge on the owners of vehicles currently registered with a statutory off road notification. [201202]

Mr. Jamieson: The DVLA consultation document on driver licensing and vehicle registration contains a range of proposals, including the possibility of an annual charge for maintaining the vehicle register, which also applies to those vehicles that have registered with a statutory off road notification. At this stage, no decision has yet been taken on whether a fee will be introduced and whether or what exemptions will apply.

The consultation period only ended on 8 November and DVLA have received hundreds of responses to this. DVLA is currently in the process of evaluating these and the conclusions and a report have to go to HM Treasury and Ministers, there will then be a further consultation period before introduction of any new fee structure. DVLA is also preparing a summary of the findings from the consultation document, for those who provided a response.

Video Conferencing Units

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [201176]

Charlotte Atkins: The information requested is as follows:

(a) DfT Central has six videoconferencing units installed in its eight HQ buildings.

The overall coverage of DfT Central buildings is 71.4 per cent.

The Department has an ongoing Videoconferencing project and this is due to install a new system in the Air Accident Investigation Branch, Farnborough, early in 2005 increasing the buildings covered to 87.5 per cent. Building coverage is therefore almost complete and further plans will focus upon new technology and accessibility to promote and increase usage of the systems.

(b) DfT agencies

	Units
Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency	13
Driving Standards Agency	6
Highways Agency	11
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	1
Vehicle Certification Agency	1
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	11
Traffic Area Network Offices	[1]6

[1] ex DfT(C), now VOSA.

The DfT agencies have concentrated their videoconferencing units at headquarters and area office level. In total there are 70 buildings classified as offices on the Agency estate (there are 1,114 sites in total) and videoconferencing is present in 49 of these, representing 70 per cent. coverage.

There are no firm plans to increase the number of units above the existing level but as with DfT(C) the accent will be on promoting and increasing usage.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [200848]

Mr. Alexander: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) policy is that no staff should be exposed to unfair discrimination on any grounds. The FCO wants to draw on the very best of Britain's diverse society by creating and maintaining an inclusive environment, and drawing upon each individual's personal background and experience to help achieve its objectives.

We are taking measures to embed diversity and ensure discrimination does not occur; these include diversity training, and the requirement to have diversity objectives for all staff.

We have also introduced in recent years flexibility for junior/clerical grades and below to retire at age 65 and for others including middle-management grades to retire at age 63.

We are reviewing our practices and procedures in the light of forthcoming age discrimination legislation to ensure that we will continue to follow best practice and operate within the spirit and letter of law.

Angola (Cabinda Province)

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the Government and Angola regarding the security situation in the province of Cabinda. [201969]

Mr. Mullin: I met the Angolan Deputy Prime Minister last month and the situation in Cabinda was one of the issues we discussed. British Embassy staff visit the province on a regular basis.

Anthony King

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the British Government are taking to assist Mr. Anthony King who is on trial in Malaysia. [201792]

Mr. Mullin: Our Honorary Consul based in Johor Bahru, where Mr. King is detained, and our Kuala Lumpur-based Deputy High Commissioner have both visited Mr. King in detention. We are also in touch with Mr. King's wife and his lawyers about his case.

Arms Embargo (China)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to support the retention of the EU arms embargo on China. [201905]

Mr. Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 476W.

British Indian Ocean Territory

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to renew the December 1966 Agreement with the United States regarding the use of the British Indian Ocean Territory for defence purposes. [201820]

Mr. Rammell: Under the initial agreement of December 1966 between the UK and the US on the use of BIOT, the whole Territory is to remain available for the defence needs of the two countries for an initial period of 50 years from 1966, and thereafter for a further period of 20 years unless either party has given prior notice to terminate it. The question of renewal therefore does not arise at the present time.

Burundi

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the situation in Burundi; and if he will make a statement. [201223]

Mr. Mullin: Burundi is relatively stable, although some areas remain insecure and there is a risk of a return to violence. All political parties worked for a peaceful extension of the transitional period and in November 2004 accepted the draft constitution. These are positive steps towards longer-term peace and stability. A referendum on the constitution is due to be held on 22 December. We encourage all parties in the country to continue to work constructively towards elections next year.

China/Zimbabwe

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of political and economic relations between China and Zimbabwe; and what discussions have taken place between the UK Government and China regarding the Mugabe regime. [201977]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned by reports that the Zimbabwean Government plans to import significant amounts of military equipment, including some from China. Given the deteriorating state of the economy this is yet further indication that the Zimbabwean Government has little concern for the welfare of ordinary Zimbabweans.

We have had no recent bilateral discussions with China specifically on Zimbabwe. However, the Chinese Government is aware of our views.

Cyprus

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the prospect for reinstatement of discussions on the Annan Plan for Cyprus. [201335]

Mr. MacShane: The Government remains strongly committed to achieving a Cyprus settlement. We continue to believe that the Annan Plan represents the only realistic basis for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution. We accept that the Greek Cypriots have genuine concerns about the plan in its current form and hope that the Greek Cypriots will come forward with proposals to move the process forward. If we believe the proposals are reasonable and have a realistic chance of success, we will encourage the UN Secretary General to re-engage and put all our resources and influence behind finding a solution on the basis of the Annan Plan that is acceptable to all sides.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in his Department for each of the last two years. [200837]

Mr. Rammell: The estimated cost of new builds, including conversion works and fit-out costs, was £20,524,000 in financial year (FY) 2002-03 and £24,508,000 in FY 2003-04. No demolition rebuilds or private finance initiative projects were undertaken during this period.

Departmental Pay

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [200849]

Mr. Alexander: In 2003 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office carried out an equal pay audit. The conclusions were:

the overall picture on average salaries within pay grades for full-time employees is within the 5 per cent. tolerance set out by the Equal Opportunities Commission;

women do not seem to be less favourably treated than men in the way they are allocated to, or progress through, the salary scale;

within each pay grade the distribution of performance ratings is in proportion to the general split.

An action plan, agreed with the trade unions, was based on the findings of the audit. A copy of the action plan will be placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Telephones

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their personal use relating to *(a)* domestic calls and *(b)* international calls; and if he will make a statement; [201113]

(2) what measures he has taken to ensure that telephones in his Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers; [201114]

(3) what estimate he has made of the cost to his Department of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic numbers and *(b)* international numbers in the last year for which figures are available. [201115]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) policy is that officials are permitted to use official telephones for minimal personal use, and we trust our staff not to abuse that, and local management to ensure it is not abused. The costs of private use of FCO telephone systems can be recovered from staff, but actual recovery of costs is a local management decision based on cost effectiveness. No central records are kept of such recoveries across the FCO and its missions abroad. In many parts of the World, use of the official FCO Telecommunications Network is the only reliable way in which FCO staff can keep in touch with relatives and friends.

Detention (USA)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken following the increase in the number of UK citizens being detained by US authorities and subsequently released without charge since 2002. [202084]

Mr. Mullin: Our statistics for the number of British nationals detained and subsequently released by the US authorities do not differentiate between those detained, charged and released and those detained and released without charge. Consequently, we cannot say if there has been an increase in the latter category.

Diplomatic Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* ambassadors and *(b)* high commissioners he has appointed since 2001; and if he will list them. [200938]

Mr. Alexander: Since June 2001, the following Heads of Mission have been appointed (146 ambassadors (HMA), 38 high commissioners (HC)):

Graham Hand, HMA Algeria
Graeme Loten, HMA Mali
Philip Priestley, HMA Belize
Basil Eastwood, HMA Switzerland
Ric Todd, HMA Slovakia
Emyr Jones Parry, UK Permanent Representative, NATO, Brussels
John Sawers, HMA Egypt
Richard Clarke, HC Tanzania
Hamish Daniel, HMA East Timor
Michael Smith, HMA Tajikistan
Brian Donnelly, HC Zimbabwe
Paul Hare, HMA Cuba
Ron Nash, HMA Afghanistan
Sue Hogwood, HMA Rwanda
Norman Ling, HC Malawi
Glynne Evans, HMA Portugal
Paul Dimond, HMA Philippines
David Reader, HC Swaziland
Anne Pringle, HMA Czech Republic
Jim Hoare, HMA North Korea
George Edgar, HMA Macedonia
Ian Soutar, HMA Bulgaria
Sherard Cowper-Coles, HMA Israel
David Landsman, HMA Albania
Robin Kealy, HMA Tunisia
Kay Coombs, HMA Honduras
Philip Rouse, HMA Mongolia
Fraser Wilson, HC Seychelles
Jeremy Hill, HMA Lithuania
David Coates, HMA Ivory Coast
Richard Makepeace, HMA UAE
Richard Gozney, HC Nigeria
Gordon Wetherell, HC Ghana
Bob Dewar, HC Ethiopia
Brian Stewart, HMA Algeria
James Sharp, HMA Kazakhstan
Christopher Prentice, HMA Jordan
Peter Westmacott, HMA Turkey
Brian Donaldson, HMA Madagascar
Paul Brummell, HMA Turkmenistan
Mike Murray, HMA Eritrea
Tony Cantor, HMA Paraguay
Simon Gass, HMA Greece
Edward Chaplin, HMA Iraq
Robin Lamb, HMA Bahrain
Laurie Bristow, HMA Azerbaijan
Andrew Caie, HC Brunei
David Fall, HMA Thailand
Eric Jenkinson, HC The Gambia
Christopher Hum, HMA China
James Watt, HMA Lebanon
David Gowan, HMA Yugoslavia
Alan Jones, HC Belize
Peter Torry, HMA Germany
Simon Featherstone, HMA Switzerland
Tom Duggin, HMA Colombia
Peter Collecott, HMA Brazil

Judith Macgregor, HMA Slovakia
John White, HMA Barbados
Richard Kinchen, HMA Belgium
Quinton Quayle, HMA Romania
John Nichols, HMA Hungary
John Hughes, HMA Argentina
Derek Plumbly, HMA Egypt
Donald Lamont, HMA Venezuela
Bernard Whiteside, HMA Moldova
Stephen Evans, HC Sri Lanka
Nicholas Browne, HMA Denmark
Peter Newall, HMA Senegal
Peter Ford, HMA Syria
Andrew Pocock, HC Tanzania
Anwar Choudhury, HC Bangladesh
Tina Redshaw, HMA East Timor
David MacLennan, HMA Qatar
Stewart Eldon, HMA Republic of Ireland
Graeme Loten, HMA Tajikistan
John Mitchiner, HC Sierra Leone
David Merry, HC Botswana
Steve Hiscock, HC Guyana
Richard Lavers, HMA Guatemala
John McManus, HMA Conakry
Colin Budd, HMA Netherlands
Robert Gordon, HMA Vietnam
Rod Pullen, HMA Zimbabwe
Simon Gass, HMA Greece
John Dew, HMA Cuba
Matthew Kirk, HMA Finland
Kathryn Colvin, HMA Holy See
Richard Lyne, HMA Solomon Islands
Mark Lyall Grant, HC Pakistan
Charles Humfrey, HMA Indonesia
Rosalind Marsden, HMA Afghanistan
Adam Wood, HC Uganda
Keith Bloomfield, HMA Nepal
William Patey, HMA Sudan
Robert Brinkley, HMA Ukraine
Jeremy Macadie, HMA Rwanda
Peter Mathers, HC Jamaica
Andy Sparkes, HMA Democratic Republic of Congo
Bruce Cleghorn, HC Malaysia
Chris Wilton, HMA Kuwait
Bill Sinton, HMA Bolivia
David Pearey, HC Malawi
Richard Ralph, HMA Peru
Linda Duffield, HMA Czech Republic
John Buck, HMA Portugal
Hugh Mortimer, HMA Slovenia
John Thompson, HMA Angola
Tim David, HC Zambia
James Clark, HMA Luxembourg
Stephen Wright, HMA Spain
Peter Beckingham, HMA Philippines
Howard Parkinson, HC Mozambique
Frank Martin, HC Lesotho
George Squires, HC Swaziland
Denise Holt, HMA Mexico
Brian Bennett, HMA Belarus
John Everard, HMA Uruguay
Tony Brenton, HMA Russian Federation
Stuart Laing, HMA Oman
Edward Clay, HC Kenya
Rod Gemmell, HMA Bahamas
Michael Arthur, HC India
Lyn Parker, HMA Cyprus
Paul Nessling, HC Tonga
Mariot Leslie, HMA Norway
David Reddway, HC Canada
Jim Malcolm, HMA Panama
John Holmes, HMA France
Tony Godson, HC Mauritius
David Gordon-Macleod, HC Papua New Guinea
Ron Nash, HC Trinidad and Tobago
David Slinn, HMA North Korea
Richard Lewington, HMA Ecuador
Haydon Warren-Gash, HMA Morocco
Vicky Bowman, HMA Burma
Alp Mehmet, HMA Iceland
Andrew Tesoriere, HMA Latvia
Sherard Cowper-Coles, HMA Saudi Arabia
Ivor Roberts, HMA Italy
Mike Gifford, HMA Yemen
Georgina Butler, HMA Costa Rica
Dick Wilkinson, HMA Chile
Andy Ashcroft, HMA Dominican Republic
Ian Cliff, HMA Bosnia & Herzegovina
Warwick Morris, HMA South Korea
Alan Collins, HMA Singapore
Robert Chatterton Dickson, HMA Macedonia
Jeremy Hill, HMA Bulgaria
Anthony Gary, HMA Sweden
Charlie Mochan, HC Fiji
Nigel Haywood, HMA Estonia
Craig Murray, HMA Uzbekistan
Donald MacLaren, HMA Georgia
Richard Dalton, HMA Iran
Simon McDonald, HMA Israel
Richard Jones, HMA Albania
Graham Fry, HMA Japan
Anthony Layden, HMA Libya
Alan Goulty, HMA Tunisia
Richard Austen, HMA Mongolia
Vincent Fean, HMA Malta
Di Skingle, HC Seychelles
David Reader, HMA Phnom Penh
Matthew Rycroft, HMA Sarajevo
Tim Simmons, HMA Ljubljana
John Macgregor, HMA Austria
Colin Roberts, HMA Lithuania
Charles Crawford, HMA Poland
David Manning, HMA USA
Richard Fell, HC New Zealand
Alasdair MacDermott, HC Namibia
Richard Wildash, HC Cameroon
Thorda Abbott-Watt, HMA Armenia
John Ramsden, HMA Croatia
Peter Ricketts, UK Permanent Representative to NATO, Brussels
John Grant, UK Permanent Representative to the EU, Brussels

John Freeman, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, Vienna
Nick Thorne, UK Permanent Representative to the UN and other International
Organisations, Geneva
Emyr Jones Parry, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, New York
David Lyscom, UK Permanent Representative to the OECD, Paris
Stephen Howarth, UK Permanent Representative to Council of Europe, Strasbourg
Colin Munro, Head of UK Delegation to the OSCE, Vienna
Peter Jenkins, Permanent Representative of the UN, Vienna

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place with UN Security Council members regarding the *(a)* size, *(b)* effectiveness and *(c)* general mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [201967]

Mr. Mullin: In response to the deteriorating security situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in mid-2004, the Security Council met to consider how MONUC's effectiveness could be improved. On 1 October 2004 the Security Council passed a revised mandate for MONUC under Security Council resolution 1565. This authorised an additional 5,900 military and civilian personnel, as well as necessary specialist force enablers. We expect the deployment of additional personnel to improve MONUC's effectiveness, first with the deployment of two new battalions in December 2004 and then with the deployment of a Brigade force to the troubled eastern region by March 2005. We continue to take an active part in Security Council discussions to ensure best use of resources and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1565.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution the UK Government is making to the international efforts to secure peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [201968]

Mr. Mullin: The UK remains committed to working towards long-term peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the region. We support the Transitional Government and are in frequent and close contact with regional and international partners on ways forward for the peace process. Our Ambassador in DRC is a member of the international committee (CIAT) to support the transition process.

The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to the DRC, giving over £34 million in 2004–05, with a principle focus on ending conflict and the climate of impunity and supporting the transition process.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the UK Government, the UN and the Democratic Republic of Congo regarding allegations of abuse made by refugees against UN civilian staff and soldiers. [201975]

Mr. Mullin: The UK and other Security Council members urged the UN to make a quick response to allegations of sexual exploitation by MONUC personnel. The UN initiated an investigation into the allegations and called for troop contributing countries to ensure that the UN's investigations are followed up by appropriate disciplinary action. In UN Security Council resolution 1565, adopted on 1 October 2004, the Security Council voiced its concern at the allegations. It asked the Secretary-General to continue to investigate the allegations and for the UN and troop contributing countries to take appropriate disciplinary action in cases of misconduct. The Security-Council also encouraged MONUC to conduct training for its personnel, aimed at ensuring their full compliance with MONUC's code of conduct on sexual impropriety.

Embassy (Consulate Assistance)

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance is made available from a British embassy or consulate to a British citizen involved *(a)* in an overseas court case and *(b)* in a serious accident overseas. [201989]

Mr. Mullin: All consular and diplomatic posts maintain lists of local English-speaking lawyers, which they make available to British nationals involved in overseas court cases.

Consular staff will also check on the progress of a case on behalf of a British national or their family, if permitted to do so by the local authorities. However, consular staff do not routinely attend court hearings, nor can they provide professional interpretation of the proceedings.

If the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is informed that a British national is hospitalised after being involved in an accident, consular staff will aim to contact him or her within 24 hours and to visit him or her within 48 hours of making contact. They may also liaise with insurance and medivac companies on behalf of the British national.

If a British national dies overseas, consular staff can advise on transport of the remains and personal property back to the UK, the cost of local burial and local cremation. They can also provide a list of local funeral directors. If an English-speaking firm is not available, consular staff will help relatives with the arrangements. They can also help transfer money from friends and relatives in the UK to pay any necessary costs.

Euro

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions the Minister for Europe has held with HM Treasury on the assessment of the five economic tests for entry to the euro. [203699]

Mr. Mullin: None. The Government's policy on membership of the single currency is unchanged. As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the 2004 Budget, "while the Government does not propose a euro assessment be initiated at the

time of this Budget, the Treasury will again review progress at Budget time next year and report to the House", *Official Report*, columns 321–36.

Eurojust

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is his Department's policy that legal immunities should be extended to Eurojust. [203696]

Mr. Mullin: Legal immunities in respect of Eurojust and its staff are a matter for the Dutch, as the Netherlands is the member state in which Eurojust is located.

European Police College

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under what legal basis the European Police College is to be designated a body of the European Union. [203700]

Mr. Mullin: Where the creation of a body is required to facilitate the attainment of the objectives set out in article 29 of the treaty then such a body may be established under the treaty. The European Police College can make a valuable contribution to the prevention and detection of crime so the establishment of the college can properly be effected by a decision under article 30(1)*(c)* of the EU treaty.

The Commission issued a draft Council decision on 1 October 2004 to formally establish the European Police College as a body of the European Union. The main aim of the proposal is to allow CEPOL to receive direct funding from the Community's budget and to fall under the auspices of the Commission's staff rules.

Haiti

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government have taken to urge partners on the UN Security Council to deploy the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti at full military and civilian strength. [201971]

Mr. Rammell: The Government works to support an effective UN mission in Haiti. We continue to take an active part in Security Council discussions on Haiti to ensure deployment of sufficient personnel and the best use of resources.

There has been considerable progress since the establishment of the mission—particularly with recent troop deployments. These are detailed in the report of the UN Secretary-General of 18 November 2004 (S2004/908), copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. As of 8 November 2004, 4,493 military personnel and 978 civilian police were deployed. This is over half the maximum authorised strength of 6,700 military personnel and 1,622 civilian police. However more progress needs to be made and we are taking steps to support this. Most recently, we were active in ensuring the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1576 (29 November 2004) which urged troop and police-contributing countries to abide by the deployment schedules agreed, and noted the particular need for more French-speaking officers.

The Government place great importance on ensuring the placement of qualified and trained personnel in the UN Mission in Haiti. In September 2004, representatives of the Metropolitan Police Service provided training assistance to police officers from China for their deployment in Haiti. The trainers focused specifically on understanding and practical application of the Rules of Engagement to ensure that the Chinese contingent would have the requisite skills for effective work on the ground. Ninety-five Chinese riot police were deployed on 17 October, representing their first ever police deployment abroad.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to assist the international efforts in Haiti to disarm and demobilise militia groups. [201972]

Mr. Rammell: The Government place great importance on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in all peace support operations. We worked to ensure that the mandate establishing the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) set DDR as one of the key mission priorities. Security Council resolution 1542 (30 April 2004) tasked MINUSTAH to "assist the Transitional Government, particularly the Haitian National Police, with comprehensive and sustainable DDR programmes for all armed groups, including women and children associated with such groups, as well as weapons control and public security measures."

This emphasis on DDR continues to be crucial. We were active in ensuring that the latest UN Security Council resolution 1576 (29 November 2004) stressed the urgency of conducting DDR and urged the Transitional Government to establish a National Commission on DDR without delay.

The Government also supports capacity building on DDR within the UN. This year we are providing over £150,000 for a project which aims to develop a comprehensive set of common and integrated policies, guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures, as well as Headquarter and field planning mechanisms and tools for the planning and conduct of DDR in a peacekeeping context.

India/Pakistan

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to help improve relations between India and Pakistan. [199821]

Mr. Alexander: Encouraging India and Pakistan to work towards a durable settlement of all their outstanding issues, including Kashmir, remains a key priority for the UK. As a close friend of both countries, the UK warmly welcomes the ongoing detente between India and Pakistan, and applauds the countries' shared commitment to a second round of formal composite dialogue talks, which began at the end of November. The UK has regular contact with senior Indians and Pakistanis. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary met the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in London on 20 September. The Foreign Secretary also met Pakistani Foreign Minister Kasuri on 23 September during the

UN General Assembly in New York. President Musharraf met senior Members of the Government when he visited the UK on 6–7 December. The UK will continue to play a prominent part in the international efforts to encourage continued progress, taking into account the sensitivities on both these countries.

Indonesia

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to promote dialogue between the people of West Papua, and the Government of Indonesia, about the conflict in West Papua; and if he will make a statement. [200978]

Mr. Alexander: We, along with other members of the international community, support Indonesia's territorial integrity, but have continued to make clear to the Indonesian Government our view that long term solutions to regional conflicts can only be achieved through negotiation and consultation with all concerned, and with strict regard for human rights.

In October, EU ministerial representatives visited Indonesia and raised our concerns about the situation in Papua with both President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hasan Wirayuda.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Indonesia concerning attacks on unarmed civilians by *(a)* Kopassus and *(b)* other Indonesian military forces in the Puncak Jaya region of West Papua; and if he will make a statement. [201016]

Mr. Alexander: Together with our European partners, we regularly raise our concerns about the situation in Papua. On 28 October, EU ministerial representatives visited Indonesia and met with the newly elected President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hasan Wirayuda. Both expressed their view that two of the key issues for the new Indonesia Government were a resolution to the problems in Papua and the promotion and protection of human rights throughout Indonesia. We are concerned about reports of violence in the Puncak Jaya region in recent weeks. We will monitor the situation closely.

Iranian Nuclear Programme

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the agreement made between the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom, France and Germany and Iran over the Iranian nuclear programme will be verified; what additional resources have been committed to verifying the agreement; and if he will make a statement. [201625]

Mr. MacShane: Iranian compliance with the terms of the Agreement will be verified by means of comprehensive inspections carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This work will be resourced through the IAEA safeguards budget, recently enhanced at the General Conference of the IAEA.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made a statement on Iran to the House on 29 November *Official Report*, columns 359–360.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what distinction the Government make between insurgents and terrorists in Iraq; and if he will make a statement; [201877]

(2) how many *(a)* insurgents and *(b)* terrorists are estimated to be operating in Iraq. [201878]

Mr. Straw: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Rammell) gave on 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 489–90W.

Mordechai Vanunu

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Israeli Government regarding Mr. Mordechai Vanunu. [201279]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware that Mordechai Vanunu was re-arrested on 11 November for allegedly divulging classified information and for violating the terms of his release. Our embassy in Tel Aviv raised this issue with Israeli officials on 2 December and asked them to clarify the position of Mr. Vanunu. The Israelis confirmed that Mr. Vanunu was released (under the original terms of his release in April) after seven days under house arrest.

Niger

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the UK Government's claim that Iraq tried to obtain uranium from Niger on the UK's relations with Niger. [201932]

Mr. Mullin: We are not aware of any negative impact on the UK Government's relations with Niger.

Simon Mann

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with officials in Harare concerning the imprisonment of Mr. Simon Mann and other British nationals. [201351]

Mr. Mullin: None. Simon Mann is a dual British/South African national. As such, and at his request, the South African Embassy are providing consular assistance. At Mr. Mann's request, and with the approval of the Zimbabwean authorities, our consular staff in Harare have, however, visited Mr. Mann in prison and will continue to do so on a regular basis. We have one other British national currently on remand in Zimbabwe awaiting trial, to whom we are providing appropriate consular assistance.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has been

informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation. [201299]

Mr. Straw: I am aware of no breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to (*a*) newspapers, (*b*) journals, (*c*) books and (*d*) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201429]

(2) if he will list the attributable (*a*) articles and (*b*) contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201454]

Mr. Straw: None. All Special Advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Tibet

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Chinese Government over their treatment of the people of Tibet, with particular regard to the death sentence on Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche; and if he will make a statement. [201904]

Mr. Rammell: We and EU partners have raised in a series of demarches with the Chinese authorities our serious concerns about the way in which the trial of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche was conducted, the lack of transparency and the commutation of the death sentence. The most recent EU demarche took place on 25 November 2004. The case was also included on our list of individual cases of concern at the UK China Human Rights Dialogue round which took place on 22 November in Beijing. I raised the case bilaterally with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui in December 2003.

I raised Tibet issues with Assistant Foreign Minister Li Hui during my visit to China in October and with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui during my visit to China in July.

Ukraine

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether Ukraine retains (*a*) operational nuclear weapons, (*b*) decommissioned nuclear weapons in storage and (*c*) a physical infrastructure and expert personnel to enable nuclear weapons to be manufactured. [201624]

Mr. MacShane: Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, in common with the other newly-independent states, renounced nuclear weapons and acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapons state. Nuclear warheads from the Soviet era that had been stationed in Ukraine were returned to Russia.

A number of institutes formerly involved in the Soviet nuclear weapons programme are located in Ukraine.

The Government has seen no information to suggest that Ukraine is not fully in compliance with its obligations under the NPT.

Visas (Pakistan)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the average waiting time is to get a visitor's visa from each consulate in Pakistan. [200562]

Mr. Mullin: Processing times for visitor's visa application to the UK from Islamabad (currently our only visa issuing post in Pakistan) as of 22 November 2004 are:

Seven working days for visitors who have travelled to the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand or Australia within the last 10 years or students and businessmen on approved schemes.

Four and a half months for first time family visitors.

There is currently a heavy demand for applications from first time non-family visitors aged 25 and over. These applicants can apply to register details of their applications and the applicant will be contacted when we are able to deal with the application. We are currently considering how to manage the volume of applications, including setting an estimated time for clearing the backlog.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum and Immigration

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost has been of enforcing section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 in each year since 1997. [201409]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate is not funded on an activity basis and therefore it is not possible to give a definitive figure for the amount of resource used to tackle illegal migrant working.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were (*a*) arrested and (*b*) removed from the country as a result of enforcement operations conducted by the Immigration Service in 2003–04. [201411]

Mr. Browne: The information requested is not available.

In 2003, 19,630 persons were removed from the United Kingdom as a result of enforcement action. This includes persons departing 'Voluntarily' after enforcement action had been initiated against them but excludes Assisted Voluntary Returns. However, this figure is not just for those removals that resulted from enforcement operations; it also includes other enforcement activity.

Data for 2004 are not available.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the five most common nationalities were of individuals found to be working illegally in the UK in the most recent period for which figures are available. [201412]

Mr. Browne: This information is not currently available. We are exploring new methods of data collection for illegal working operations that will make this type of information available in the future.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have taken place under section 2 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004; how many of these are being dealt with in magistrates courts; and how many have been referred to Crown courts. [201611]

Mr. Browne: Between 29 September 2004 and 29 November there have been 112 people charged under Section 2 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004.

32 cases have been convicted in magistrates courts and have received custodial sentences.

The remaining cases are currently going through proceedings in the magistrates courts and are being referred from there when appropriate to the Crown court.

The figures provided are obtained from locally collated management information and may be subject to change.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have been dispersed to each parliamentary constituency in *(a)* the two years up to the end of 2003 and *(b)* the latest two-year period for which figures are available. [199717]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: Figures for asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation support in each parliamentary constituency as at the end of September 2004 are presented in the following table. Information in respect of the number of persons dispersed to an area during a given year is not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Information on the number of asylum seekers supported by NASS is published quarterly on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1, 2, 3, 4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government Office Region, as at end of September 2004

Government office region	Parliamentary constituency name[5]	Number of asylum seekers
East Midlands	Derby North	135
	Derby South	545
	Gedling	20
	Leicester East	155
	Leicester South	225
	Leicester West	450
	Lincoln	20
	Loughborough	15
	Northampton North	5
	Northampton South	*
	Nottingham East	710
	Nottingham North	60
	Nottingham South	365
	Rushcliffe	5
	South Derbyshire	5
	Sub-total	2,715
East of England	Bedford	5
	Central Suffolk and North Ipswich	*
	Epping Forest	15
	Ipswich	55
	Luton North	*
	Luton South	10
	North West Cambridgeshire	95
	Norwich North	60
	Norwich South	45
	Peterborough	255
	Rochford and Southend East	10
	Southend West	5
	Stevenage	*
	Sub-total	565
Northern Ireland	Belfast North	15
	Belfast South	50
	Belfast West	30
	East Londonderry	*
	Newry & Armagh	*
	Sub-total	100
London	Barking	25
	Beckenham	10
	Bethnal Green and Bow	*
	Bexleyheath and Crayford	5
	Brent East	5
	Brent North	10
	Brent South	10
	Brentford and Isleworth	*
	Camberwell and Peckham	10
	Chingford and Woodford Green	45
	Chipping Barnet	10
	Croydon Central	40
	Croydon North	25
	Croydon South	5
	Dagenham	10
	Dulwich and West Norwood	10
	Ealing North	25
	Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	20
	Ealing Southall	25
	East Ham	30
	Edmonton	100
	Eltham	*
	Enfield North	65
	Enfield Southgate	50
	Erith and Thamesmead	*
	Feltham and Heston	10
	Finchley and Golders Green	20
	Greenwich and Woolwich	5
	Hackney North and Stoke Newington	30
	Hackney South and Shoreditch	50
	Hammersmith and Fulham	15
	Hampstead and Highgate	10
	Harrow East	15
	Harrow West	10
	Hayes and Harlington	10
	Hendon	15
	Holborn and St. Pancras	5
	Hornsey and Wood Green	95
	Ilford North	10
	Ilford South	35
	Islington North	30
	Islington South and Finsbury	40
	Kingston and Surbiton	10
	Lewisham East	10
	Lewisham West	20
	Lewisham Deptford	10
	Leyton and Wanstead	10
	Mitcham and Morden	5
	North Southwark and Bermondsey	15

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1, 2, 3, 4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government Office Region, as at end of September 2004

Government office region	Parliamentary constituency name[5]	Number of asylum seekers
	Old Bexley and Sidcup	5
	Poplar and Canning Town	15
	Regent's Park and North Kensington	15
	Richmond Park	5
	Streatham	15
	Sutton and Cheam	5
	Tooting	5
	Tottenham	270
	Twickenham	5
	Upminster	5
	Uxbridge	5
	Vauxhall	20
	Walthamstow	40
	West Ham	40
	Sub-total	1,475
North East	Darlington	30
	Gateshead East and Washington West	75
	Hartlepool	30
	Houghton and Washington East	120
	Jarrow	25
	Middlesbrough	595
	Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	75
	Newcastle upon Tyne Central	460
	Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend	470
	Newcastle upon Tyne North	155
	North Tyneside	150
	Redcar	255
	South Shields	120
	Stockton North	210
	Stockton South	180
	Sunderland North	130
	Sunderland South	240
	Tyne Bridge	775
	Tynemouth	65
	Sub-total	4,165
North West	Altrincham and Sale West	5
	Ashton under Lyne	245
	Blackburn	235
	Bolton North East	225
	Bolton South East	400
	Bolton West	60
	Bootle	55
	Burnley	30
	Bury North	320
	Bury South	120
	Cheadle	5
	Crewe and Nantwich	10
	Denton and Reddish	75
	Eccles	140
	Hazel Grove	30
	Heywood and Middleton	15
	Hyndburn	*
	Leigh	200
	Liverpool Garston	10
	Liverpool Riverside	340
	Liverpool Walton	160
	Liverpool Wavertree	350
	Liverpool West Derby	70
	Makerfield	160
	Manchester Central	520
	Manchester Blackley	150
	Manchester Gorton	450
	Manchester Withington	35
	Oldham East and Saddleworth	150
	Oldham West and Royton	310
	Pendle	20
	Preston	*
	Rochdale	410
	Rossendale and Darwen	85
	Salford	705
	Stalybridge and Hyde	45
	Stockport	115
	Stretford and Urmston	85
	Wigan	210
	Worsley	105
	Wythenshawe and Sale East	65
	Sub-total	6,720
Scotland	Glasgow Anniesland	470
	Glasgow Baillieston	145
	Glasgow Cathcart	270
	Glasgow Govan	1,105
	Glasgow Kelvin	540
	Glasgow Maryhill	180
	Glasgow Pollok	255
	Glasgow Rutherglen	195
	Glasgow Shettleston	380
	Glasgow Springburn	2,120
	Sub-total	5,665
South East	Brighton Pavilion	35
	Dartford	5
	Hastings and Rye	215
	Hove	40
	Medway	5
	North East Milton Keynes	*
	Oxford East	15
	Portsmouth North	135
	Portsmouth South	255
	Slough	10
	Southampton Itchen	*
	Southampton Test	*
	Sub-total	720
South West	Bristol East	225
	Bristol North West	40
	Bristol South	25
	Bristol West	65
	Exeter	30
	Gloucester	85
	Kingswood	85
	North Swindon	40
	Plymouth Devonport	50
	Plymouth Sutton	340
	South Dorset	*
	South Swindon	75
	Sub-total	1,060
Wales	Cardiff Central	405
	Cardiff North	60
	Cardiff South and Penarth	365
	Cardiff West	160
	Clwyd South	10
	Gower	15
	Newport East	170
	Newport West	155
	Swansea East	570
	Swansea West	320
	Wrexham	45
	Sub-total	2,280
West Midlands	Aldridge-Brownhills	130
	Birmingham Edgbaston	200
	Birmingham Erdington	185
	Birmingham Hall Green	15
	Birmingham Hodge Hill	50
	Birmingham Ladywood	1,140
	Birmingham Northfield	5
	Birmingham Perry Barr	365
	Birmingham Selly Oak	110
	Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath	315
	Birmingham Yardley	25
	Coventry North East	235
	Coventry North West	85
	Coventry South	460
	Dudley North	265
	Dudley South	225
	Halesowen and Rowley Regis	110
	Meriden	95
	Mid Worcestershire	5
	Newcastle-under-Lyme	35
	Nuneaton	5

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1, 2, 3, 4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government Office Region, as at end of September 2004

Government office region	*Parliamentary constituency name[5]*	*Number of asylum seekers*
	Solihull	5
	Stoke-on-Trent Central	380
	Stoke-on-Trent North	235
	Stoke-on-Trent South	110
	Stourbridge	95
	Walsall North	135
	Walsall South	250
	Warley	510
	West Bromwich East	160
	West Bromwich West	90
	Wolverhampton North East	415
	Wolverhampton South East	110
	Wolverhampton South West	255
	Sub-total	6,805
Yorkshire and The Humber	Barnsley Central	320
	Barnsley East and Mexborough	80
	Barnsley West and Penistone	130
	Batley and Spen	15
	Bradford North	230
	Bradford South	175
	Bradford West	790
	City of York	5
	Colne Valley	170
	Dewsbury	105
	Don Valley	40
	Doncaster Central	855
	Doncaster North	70
	Great Grimsby	155
	Halifax	260
	Hemsworth	35
	Huddersfield	655
	Keighley	5
	Kingston upon Hull East	40
	Kingston upon Hull North	225
	Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	360
	Leeds Central	835
	Leeds East	600
	Leeds North East	335
	Leeds North West	20
	Leeds West	260
	Morley and Rothwell	5
	Normanton	65
	Pontefract and Castleford	75
	Pudsey	*
	Rother Valley	25
	Rotherham	570
	Sheffield Central	660
	Sheffield Attercliffe	175
	Sheffield Brightside	290
	Sheffield Heeley	155
	Sheffield Hillsborough	25
	Shipley	70
	Wakefield	240
	Wentworth	80
	Sub-total	9,210
	Total	41,475

[1] Figures have been rounded to nearest 5, with "*" = 1 or 2, and are provisional.

[2] Asylum seekers that have been allocated NASS accommodation and have been confirmed as having arrived in that accommodation

[3] Excludes unaccompanied asylum seeking children supported by local authorities, estimated at around 7,000 in May 2004. Excludes cases that pre-date the establishment of NASS in April 2000, administered under arrangements with local authorities, estimated at up to 16,000 cases in May 2004 (the number of such cases is falling).

[4] Excludes cases where support has been ceased by the National Asylum Support Service.

[5] Only those parliamentary constituencies where NASS dispersed or disbenefitted cases are resident are shown.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers have had their benefits withdrawn under section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004. [201392]

Mr. Browne: None. Section 9 came into force only on 1 December 2004, and is being piloted in a limited number of areas. Failed asylum seeking families subject to the provision will be given three written warnings that their support may be terminated if they fail without reasonable excuse to take reasonable steps to leave the United Kingdom voluntarily, or place themselves in a position in which they can leave the United Kingdom voluntarily. They also have the opportunity to attend an interview. This process takes a number of weeks before a decision is made on whether support should be withdrawn.

Asylum Seekers (European Pilot Projects)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the meeting of Ministers of the member states of the European Union and Community to consider the establishment of pilot projects to receive those wishing to seek asylum within the Union, what the origin was of the document containing those proposals; who was responsible for producing that document; what the treaty bases were for those proposals; which member states supported the proposal in principle pending administrative agreement; what views were presented to meetings by representatives of the United Kingdom; who those representatives were; what consultations in *(a)* private and *(b)* public were held in the UK prior to the response made on behalf of the UK; and what progress has been made with the project. [200097]

Mr. Browne: In June 2003 the European Commission published a Communication (COM(2003)315 final) "Towards more accessible, equitable and managed asylum systems". That discussion document examined possible policy objectives and approaches for reformed asylum systems, having regard to concerns expressed by the UK about the deficiencies of the international protection system for refugees. The Thessaloniki European Council in June, 2003 took note of the Communication and invited the Commission to present a further report, by June 2004, suggesting measures to ensure more orderly and managed entry in the EU of persons in need of international protection and to enhance the protection capacity in the regions of origin.

On 4 June this year the Commission presented its further Communication "On the managed entry in the EU of persons in need of international protection and the enhancement of the protection capacity of the regions of origin—Improving access to durable solutions" (COM(2004)410 final). This contains two main recommendations. Firstly, the Commission advocates the development—in close co-operation with UNHCR and in partnership with the third countries concerned—of "flexible and situation specific EU Regional Protection Programmes", designed to address protection issues in third countries in the regions of origin. Secondly, the Commission proposes the development of a EU Resettlement Scheme. This would enable member states who wished to, to join forces in

receiving, direct from regions of origin, persons found to be in need of international protection. The Communication itself has no legal base. The proposed EU Resettlement Scheme would be based upon Article 63(2)*(b)* of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC).

Representatives of EU member states have discussed the Commission's Communication in various fora at both official and ministerial level (including the Justice and Home Affairs Council, the Strategic Committee on Immigration Frontiers and Asylum, the High Level Working Group and the Development Working Group). These discussions showed widespread support for Regional Protection Programmes among member states although an EU Resettlement Scheme is unlikely to be acceptable to some. The UK welcomed the Commission's Communication and supported the broad purpose of its proposals, while making it clear that national Governments of participating member states must retain final control of the numbers and origins of any refugees accepted in their territory.

EU Foreign Ministers adopted conclusions at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 2 November which require the Commission to present to the Council an action plan for one or more pilot Regional Protection Programme(s), and a proposal for a possible resettlement scheme, by July 2005. Furthermore, the European Council at its meeting of 5 November agreed the Hague Programme setting out a five-year work programme for JHA. This called on the Commission to develop EU Regional Protection Programmes in partnership with the third countries concerned and in close co-operation with the UNHCR.

British Nationality

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why British nationality is not granted to an individual born in Britain to a British father if the individual's mother is not a British national; if he will bring forward proposals to allow maternal and paternal nationality to be of equal weight when determining the nationality of a child born in Britain; and if he will make a statement. [200482]

Mr. Browne: British citizenship is acquired automatically, at birth, by a person born in the United Kingdom if either his mother or (providing the child is legitimate) his father was at the time of the birth either a British citizen or settled in the United Kingdom. Where, owing to illegitimacy, British citizenship is not acquired automatically it may be acquired subsequent to birth by registration on application to the Secretary of State. Such registration is discretionary, but the current policy is to grant it where the father is a British citizen, there is satisfactory evidence of paternity and both parents consent. Section 9 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 will remove the distinction in British nationality law between legitimate and illegitimate children but will not take effect until regulations concerning proof of paternity are in place.

Citizenship Ceremony

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average waiting time is between notification of British citizenship being conferred and the confirmation of citizenship ceremony in *(a)* England and *(b)* Dorset. [201339]

Mr. Browne: The information requested is not readily available. However, each citizenship ceremony should be conducted within three months of the decision to grant the application in principle.

Community Safety/Support Officers

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what applications he has received from West Midlands Police funds for community safety officers in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07. [199503]

Ms Blears: For 2004–05 West Midlands Police applied for Home Office funding for 50 per cent. of salary and direct on-costs for 40 Community Support Officers. The force were allocated funding for 33 posts under this round.

For 2005–06 the force applied for funding for 100 per cent. of salary and direct on costs up to £24,500 for each of 165 full-time equivalent Community Support Officers under the first round of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund. The force were allocated 81 posts under this round.

Allocations in both rounds were scaled back because the overall demand from forces exceeded the funds available.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account the maximum funded cost for a community support officer takes of higher police pay in London. [199713]

Ms Blears: Community Support Officers (CSOs) are employed by police authorities and their terms and conditions of employment are determined locally, not by the Home Office. The maximum available under the first round of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund (NPF) was £24,500 per CSO post for salary related costs. In addition a one-off payment was made available of £2,500 per post towards training and additional costs.

The first round of NPF was massively oversubscribed and bids from forces had to be scaled down considerably. The Metropolitan police were allocated 250 posts under this round.

Correspondence

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Aylesbury (reference B2050/4) of 27 September about the surety lodged by Mr M. A. of Aylesbury (case reference A1022329). [199603]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Department sent a holding reply to the hon. Member on 29 November. The circumstances of the case are currently being examined and a more detailed reply will be sent within two weeks.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letter of 6 August to the Minister of State for

Immigration from the hon. Member for Aylesbury (reference PO9072/4) about Mr A. R. of Aylesbury (references R1055140/2 and PO4967/03). [199604]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart) wrote to the hon. Member on 25 November.

Dungavel Detention Centre

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to reopen Dungavel Detention Centre to families; and whether a date has been set for such a reopening. [199785]

Mr. Browne: Following the disturbance at Harmondsworth in July it was necessary, for a short time, to use the family accommodation at Dungavel for single male detainees.

The family accommodation at Dungavel is no longer being used for this purpose and families are being detained there as appropriate.

EC Directive 2004/81

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which EU member states have opted out of EC Directive 2004/81. [199873]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 25 November 2004]:* The United Kingdom, together with Ireland and Denmark chose not to opt into EC Directive 2004/81. This decision was subject of a cross Whitehall review following the adoption of the directive in April 2004. A further review is planned once reliable data on the effects of the directive become available.

Gurkhas

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Gurkhas who were discharged from the British Army before 1 July 1997 have applied for settlement in the UK. [199718]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* This information is not recorded and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, under the new HM Forces policy any application for settlement received from a Gurkha who was discharged from the British Army before 1 July 1997 will be given sympathetic consideration as outlined in my letter to the right hon. Member dated 18 October.

Identity Cards

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the implications of the introduction of compulsory identity cards for his Department. [201580]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for the Identity Cards Bill was published on 29 November. The RIA set out a cost-benefit analysis of the scheme. The benefits described in the RIA fall into the following categories: more efficient processes, removing duplication of functions, reduced fraud, more convenient access to services, improved enforcement of immigration controls, enhanced ability to counter terrorism and organised crime, reduced fear of crime and ensuring that the UK can continue to benefit from free movement between nations.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimate he has made of the likely unit cost of a biometric identity card reader; [201405]

(2) if he will publish the cost estimates for identity card readers which have been included in the work with stakeholders on benefits cited on page 25 of his Department's response to the Home Affairs Committee's Fourth Report of 2003–04. [201441]

Mr. Browne: Paragraph 23 of the Regulatory Impact Assessment, published alongside the Identity Cards Bill, sets out that the current working assumption is that the cost of card readers would fall within a range of £250-£750, depending on their level of sophistication and performance.

The ability of the reader to check a biometric as well as the card in high risk, high value transactions would put the range of costs for these type of readers towards the higher end of £250-£750 range. Integrated with other security and verification requirements, this cost could fall substantially over the years ahead.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the potential savings in reduced identity fraud costs as a result of the identity cards scheme. [201406]

Mr. Browne: The extent of identity fraud costs is included in section 24(iii) of the regulatory impact assessment which was published when the Identity Cards Bill was introduced on 29 November. It states that:

> "A Cabinet Office study published in 2002 estimated the cost of identity fraud in the UK to be £1.3 billion p.a. split equally between the public and private sectors."

We are working with organisations in both the public and private sectors to understand in detail how the introduction of the identity cards scheme will reduce identity fraud.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned into the benefits of identity cards in reducing terrorism. [201408]

Mr. Browne: The Regulatory Impact Assessment, published alongside the Identity Cards Bill on 29 November sets out in detail the benefits of identity cards in countering terrorism.

Officials have worked closely with the security and intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies in drawing up this assessment. At least one third of terrorist suspects are known to have used more than one identity either for facilitation or planning the commission of terrorist acts.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the employers and other interested groups being consulted about the design of the identity cards verification service. [201410]

Mr. Browne: Home Office officials have had high level discussions relating to verification design with various employer organisations including the Confederation of

British Industry, the Inland Revenue payroll group/the Small Business Service and other representative trade bodies in the financial services and transport sectors. Home Office officials are also working with private sector organisations to assess the demand for a user group of private sector organisations which will provide co-ordinated input to the design and development of the verification service.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the annual £85 million cost of the identity cards scheme announced on 2 November includes the cost of adding visual verification features to the face of the card; and what visual verification options are under consideration. [201414]

Mr. Browne: The £85 million cost includes personalising the card with a photograph and the provision of security features to minimise the risk of forgery.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passports the Immigration and Nationality Directorate has lost in each of the last five years. [200972]

Mr. Browne: Statistics on the number of letters issued for passports reported lost or mislaid in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) would be available only at disproportionate cost.

However, in General Group there were 53 issued from April 2001 to March 2002; 335 issued from April 2002 to March 2003; 469 issued from April 2003 to March 2004; and 162 issued from April 2004 to September 2004. This should be balanced against the number of decisions made in the same period which were 380,000 (0.01 per cent.); 403,000 (0.08 per cent.); 534,000 (0.08 per cent.); and 250,000 (0.06 per cent.) respectively.

Immigration Controls

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been stopped from entering the UK by British customs officials working at the Eurostar rail terminus at the Gare du Nord, Paris, in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [201627]

Mr. Browne: The statistics requested are not available at this point due to operational changes that have recently occurred at Waterloo, the office that previously handled Paris statistics. Once my officials have completed their reconciliation work I will write to you to advise you of the numbers.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in which European Union member states British immigration officers inspect the passports of passengers seeking to travel to the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [201628]

Mr. Browne: UK immigration officers are deployed to the Eurostar Terminal in Brussels, Belgium and in France at both ferry ports and channel tunnel ports.

Channel Tunnel Ferry Ports

Coquelles

Calais Frethun

Lille

Paris

Ferry Ports

Calais Ferryport

Calais Hoverport

Boulogne

Dunkerque

At all these locations Immigration Officers mount a full immigration control (which includes the inspection of all passports) for those passengers seeking to travel to the UK.

Migrant Workers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the National Association of Citizen Advice Bureaux on advice to migrant workers. [199410]

Mr. Browne: Home Office officials have frequent contact on a range of immigration issues with the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB), who are represented on the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's main stakeholder discussion group, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate User Panel which meets every six months.

Our records also indicate that discussions took place between Work Permits UK (WPUK) and NACAB in relation to a leaflet produced for overseas nationals in summer 2003. The leaflet entitled "Useful Information for the Work Permit holder", provided information to foreign nationals working in the UK who may be at risk of exploitation. The leaflet was translated into seven languages: Chinese, Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali and Hindi. NACAB endorsed WPUK's leaflet, and CAB offices throughout the UK were supplied with English versions and the translated versions were made available on request.

Office of Government Commerce

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which stages of the Office of Government Commerce Gateway process the identity cards project has passed through. [201404]

Mr. Browne: The Office of Government Commerce completed a Gateway Zero Review of the Identity Cards Programme in January 2004.

Passport Renewal (Charges)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what charges are made to Commonwealth citizens who wish to renew their passports to allow continued residence in the UK; whether these charges apply to residents whose country of birth is a member of the EU; and if he will make a statement. [200327]

Mr. Browne: Commonwealth and other foreign nationals (non-EEA) who wish to renew their passports and currently have indefinite leave to remain endorsed in their previous passport should apply for a No Time Limit endorsement to be placed in their new passport.

No Time Limit applications currently attract a charge of £155 for postal applications and £250 for Premium, same day, service at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's (IND) Public Enquiry Offices.

Those who wish to transfer limited leave to remain to a new passport can currently do so free of charge at an IND Public Enquiry Office, by making a Transfer of Condition application.

The fee levels for leave to remain applications are currently under review and IND have been undertaking a public consultation on various fee ranges. The consultation is due to close on 8 December 2004. IND aim to introduce the revised fees on 1 April 2005. This is likely to include a charge for Transfer of Conditions.

Charges for leave to remain applications do not apply to residents whose country of birth is a member of the EU.

Passports

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many complaints have been received of passports being delivered to the wrong address when despatched from passport offices within the last 12 months; [201187]

(2) how many passports have been reported as missing within the last 12 months after being despatched from passport offices. [201188]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* Since 9 February 2004, when secure delivery was introduced, the UK Passport Service (UKPS) have received 538 complaints about passports being delivered to an incorrect address. These have been, or are being, investigated by UKPS or SMS who are the secure delivery provider.

The number of passports delivered to the wrong address is 0.01 per cent. of the total number of passports delivered by SMS.

Over the same period 675 UK passports have been reported as missing after being despatched from UKPS premises. Of these 210 have been confirmed as lost or stolen, 87 have been recovered and the remaining 478 are under investigation. In comparison in the final year of the Royal Mail contract 3,593 passports were reported lost or stolen.

Police Advice Bodies

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total budget is in this financial year for *(a)* the National Centre for Policing Excellence, *(b)* the National Policing Improvement Agency, *(c)* the Police Science and Technology Unit, *(d)* Police Powers and Leadership Unit and *(e)* Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2004–05; what the budget for equivalent services was in 1997; and how many staff are employed by each body. [201190]

Ms Blears: There have been a number of changes in police scientific and technological services in recent years, which mean that the organisations with policy and operational responsibility for them are not the same as those which existed in 1997, nor do current functions entirely match those carried out in 1997.

The National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) was established in April 2003. It employs 361 staff and has a total budget of £15.5 million of which £5.5million is funded by the Home Office directly. CENTREX, the national police training provider, of which the NCPE is a directorate, provides the balance of NCPE funding.

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) will be established by the end of 2006–07. The Agency will rationalise the existing national bodies concerned with delivering improved policing outcomes. The NPIA will be cost neutral and it is intended that the streamlined arrangements will reduce the resources currently applied to the bodies that it will replace.

The Police Science and Technology Unit (PSTU) no longer exists and budget information for 1997 is not readily available.

The Police Leadership and Powers Unit was established in June 2000. It currently has a budget of £125 million and employs 85 staff.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary currently employs 128 staff and has a budget in 2004–05 of £9.2 million.

Expenditure by the Inspectorate in 1997–98 was £5.1 million.

Police Officers' Pension Scheme

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many widows of police officers who are beneficiaries of the police officers' pension scheme lost their pension rights as a result of cohabitation or remarriage in each of the last three years; and what estimate he has made of the cost of restoring pension rights to these widows; [200366]

(2) how many widows of police officers who lost their police officer pension scheme benefits as a result of remarriage or cohabitation in the last three years have subsequently *(a)* had their pensions restored on compassionate grounds and *(b)* had their pensions rights restored following the ending of the second marriage or cohabitation; [200383]

Ms Blears: This information for all forces in England and Wales is not held centrally.

Ports

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which British shipping ports have the use of *(a)* stationary lorry scanning equipment and *(b)* mobile scanning equipment. [201516]

Mr. Browne: The United Kingdom Immigration Service (UKIS) deploys fixed new detection technology, such as Heartbeat Detection equipment at the juxtaposed controls in France, and it is loaned to the

port authorities at Calais, Coquelles, Oostende, and Vlissingen. UKIS do not currently operate fixed equipment at UK ports.

The United Kingdom Immigration Service operates mobile VACIS Gamma ray scanning unit, as a joint operation with Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMC and E), which is deployed to support intelligence-led freight search operations.

HMC and E deploy mobile scanning equipment at various ports throughout the UK.

Yarls Wood

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to which individuals the Home Office sent advance copies of the Prisons Service Ombudsman's Report on the disturbance and fire at the Yarls Wood Removal Centre; and when advance copies were sent out. [201519]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 2 December 2004]*: Following discussion with Mr Shaw, advance copies were sent to all parties immediately affected by the report. The advance copies were sent shortly before the report's publication.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take to implement the recommendations in the report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman into the disturbance and fire at the Yarls Wood Removal Centre. [199792]

Mr. Browne: Stephen Shaw makes 76 recommendations, the majority of which we accept and have either already been implemented (26), or are being reviewed regarding the practicalities of introduction. Following the review of the recommendations we will produce an action plan that will be published in early 2005.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, Special Advisers and officials in the Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202154]

Mr. Lammy *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: My department has provided the following number of mobile phones to *(a)* Ministers and Special Advisers and *(b)* officials in the Department since 1997:

Number

	(a)	*(b)*
1997–98	n/a	—
1998–99	n/a	—
1999–2000	9	1486
2000–01	9	1346
2001–02	9	1497
2002–03	9	1780
2003–04	10	1971
2004- September 2004	10	2750

Figures from 1997 to March 1999 cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate costs.

The "cost' of these mobile phones has been interpreted to mean, the cost of the equipment, the line rental and the call costs and is:

	£
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	n/a
1999–2000	223,000.00
2000–01	202,000.00
2001–02	224,626.00
2002–03	266,969.00
2003–04	295,741.00
2004-September 2004	185,000.00

During the period 1999 to 2004, four phones have been reported lost and one phone reported stolen from the HQ Estate. The only cost to the Department has been for the replacement handsets and this equates to £250.00 in total. Due to the fact that on the wider Court Service and PGO estates, the phones are allocated to individual cost centres, it would incur a disproportionate cost to try obtain this information.

Directgov

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) which Government Departments are *(a)* covered by and *(b)* excluded from the Directgov website; [201919]

(2) how much of the Department's budget *(a)* was spent on the launch of the Directgov website and *(b)* is incurred in Directgov's running costs; and how many hits it has received since its launch. [201920]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

Directgov is the Government's new primary digital service to provide citizens access to the full range of Government services. Launched in April 2004 it continues to expand its range of citizen focused content with contributions in its latest release from Cabinet Office, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (including local authorities), Department for Transport, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Inland Revenue, Home Office, Environmental Agency, Office of Fair Trading, Land Registry, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Electoral Commission, H.M. Customs and Excise, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Department for Trade and Industry, and Financial Services Authority. This list is expected to expand with all Government Departments encouraged to present their citizen facing information and services through Directgov.

Directgov was initially delivered as an integrated programme with UK Online from an existing operational budget of £4.4million in 2003–04. Annual running costs for this financial year are not yet available. Since Directgov's launch in April 2004 it has recorded over 5.2 million visits to the website, increasing from 420,000 visits in May to over 900,000 visits during November.

Family Division

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average length of time was between applications for hearings in the Principal Registry of the Family Division and the hearings themselves between 1 November and 3 December; and which cases were given return dates of less than 21 days. [203730]

Mr. Leslie: The Principal Registry of the Family Division issued 2,521 applications between the 1 November and 3 December. Cases were listed individually with reference to the specific circumstances involved. Information about the average length of time between application being made and the hearing is not collected and is therefore not available.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications for adjournment were made in the Principal Registry of the Family Division in London between 18 November and 1 December; what the average length of time was between application and hearing during that period; and which cases were heard within fewer than seven days. [203731]

Mr. Leslie: Appeals to the High Court relating to applications for adjournment in the Family Division are relatively rare. Between the 18 November and 3 December there was one such appeal, this appeal was heard in fewer than 14 days.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many appeals were made to the High Court relating to applications for adjournment in the Family Division between 18 November and 3 December; what the average length of time was between application and hearing; and which appeals were heard in fewer than 14 days. [203732]

Mr. Leslie: Detailed information relating to the specific nature of applications made to the Principal Registry of the Family Division is not collected outside of general business headings i.e. Ancillary Relief—211; Applications for Decree Nisi listed—658. Adjournments are not classified as a business heading as they can apply across all business areas. It is therefore not possible to provide information about the average length of time between application and hearing for types of application, between specific dates, or at all.

FOI (Ministerial Committee)

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the work programme of the Ministerial Committee on Freedom of Information (MSC28). [202109]

Mr. Leslie: It is established practice, as reflected in the Ministerial Code and Under Exemption 2 of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, not to disclose information relating to the proceedings of the Cabinet and its committees.

However in a previous written answer on 8 September 2004 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister noted that the Ministerial Committee on Freedom of Information (MISC28) was announced to Parliament on Thursday 27 May 2004. The Committee was established to oversee the Government's strategy on Freedom of Information, particularly as Government Departments make final preparations for the full implementation of the Freedom of Information Act on 1 January 2005.

As the Prime Minister announced to Parliament on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 105WS the current list of Cabinet committees, their membership and terms of reference are available in the Libraries of both Houses and on the Cabinet Office website. The terms of reference of the Ministerial Committee on Freedom of Information (MISC 28) are:

> "To oversee the Government's strategy on freedom of Information and implementation of the Freedom of Information 2000."

Hearing Technology (XHIBIT)

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what impact the Exchanging Hearing Information by Internet Technology scheme has had on Crown court trials and witness waiting times since its introduction; [201918]

(2) what the cost is of implementation of the advance pilot of XHIBIT which was run at Snaresbrook Crown court; [201922]

(3) what plans he has to roll out the advance pilot of XHIBIT run at Snaresbrook Crown court to the rest of England; [201923]

Mr. Leslie: The Snaresbrook XHIBIT (Exchanging Hearing Information BY Internet Technology) pilot evaluation report has identified the following major impacts on Crown court trials:

- Faster updating of the Police National Computer (PNC).
- More efficient distribution of information across the Criminal Justice System.
- Reduction in solicitor waiting times.
- Improved Victim and Witness experience, including:
  - A significant reduction in the amount of time spent by Police Officers waiting to give evidence (valued nationally at £15 million per annum);
  - witnesses being more likely to continue to attend court;
  - witnesses being able to manage their expectations of waiting times;

The cost of the Snaresbrook pilot has been £10.5 million, over three years (2002–03; 2003–04; 2004–05).

The Snaresbrook Pilot has been completed and the business case has been accepted. The formal approval to proceed to national rollout of XHIBIT was given on 10 November 2004 by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform Operational Board. The evaluation identified the potential to realise benefits in excess of £50 million per annum across the Criminal Justice System.

In addition, benefits estimated to be a further £96 million per annum are available to the wider UK economy as a result of reductions in the overall cost of crime.

XHIBIT is now being rolled out in every Crown court within the 42 criminal justice areas that make up England and Wales.

National rollout will be completed in spring 2006.

Legal Aid (ASBOs)

Bob Spink: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if it is his policy to make legal aid available to youths who seek to challenge anti-social behaviour orders; and if he will make a statement. [202931]

Mr. Lammy: Legal aid is already available for youths both to resist the application to make an order and to appeal an order once made.

It is our intention to streamline the use of Legal Aid in anti-social behaviour (ASBOS) cases. We intend to work with the Home Office and Legal Services Commission to introduce, by the end of 2005, a system of fixed fees for the public funding of defence solicitors in cases involving the application for anti-social behaviour orders. A fixed fee scheme will ensure swifter justice without compromising fairness. But it will also discourage the small minority who use unnecessary delaying tactics and subsequently deny the deterrence and protection that ASBO's give to our communities.

More generally, my Department has responded to concern about anti-social behaviour by establishing ASB Response Courts. These courts can make a difference at a local level by ensuring ASB cases are dealt with justly—but expeditiously—with awareness of what matters to local communities—while working in close co-operation with other local partners.

Bob Spink: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have applied for legal aid in order to challenge anti-social behaviour orders; and how many have been granted legal aid. [202976]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested cannot be provided as the number of applications and grants cannot be readily identified from records held by the Legal Services Commission.

Prison Video Links

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many prisoners have attended court by video conferencing from prison since the introduction of Prison Video Links; how many court rooms have video link facilities; and what cost savings have been made since Prison Video Link was introduced. [201921]

Mr. Leslie: Since December 2002, 64,944 court hearings have taken place over video links from prisons. There are currently 180 Video Courts in 154 Magistrates Courts, 76 Video Courts in 30 Crown Courts and 75 Video Courts in 57 Prisons. Escort contracts used to transport defendants from prison to court were fixed price contracts until 1 September 2004 thus little or no savings have been accrued for this part of the operation as yet.

Project Eagle

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on progress with Project Eagle, to make UK law more accessible to people who need advice through enhanced computer technology. [202977]

Mr. Lammy: Project Eagle is a cutting edge partnership initiative between the Legal Services Commission, two Midlands Citizens Advice Bureaux and "Citizens Advice". The system is intended as a support tool for advice givers, with the intention of enabling trained generalist advisers to deliver more specialist advice and develop the capability of a specialist, starting with the area of employment advice.

In the two years Project Eagle has been running, work has progressed to build and trial the system. Initially funding was through the Treasury's Invest to Save Budget.

HEALTH

Dentistry

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on future contractual arrangements between the primary care trusts and dentists. [200520]

Ms Rosie Winterton: With effect from next October, the Department will be delegating the commissioning of national health service dentistry to primary care trusts through new contractual arrangements that will replace the present item for service payments with a remuneration system that focuses on better meeting patients' overall oral health needs. To support these reforms, we will be allocating extra funding of £250 million a year from 2005–06—an increase of 19.3 per cent., compared with spending in 2003–04 on NHS dentistry.

Representatives from the British Dental Association (BDA) and departmental officials last met on 24 November to discuss the new contractual arrangements, and agreed the following joint statement:

> "The Department of Health and the BDA are continuing discussions on the new contractual arrangements to take effect from October 2005. Both sides are conscious of the need to achieve early outcome and will be meeting again early next month"

We received a letter, via e-mail, from the BDA at 3.15pm. on 7 December stating that they did not wish to continue the discussions and would not be attending the meetings scheduled for 8 December and 20 December.

Preparations for the dentistry reforms, including new contractual arrangements, remain on course for introduction from 1 October 2005. We will continue to keep the House informed of progress.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [200788]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's canteens are a nil subsidy operation. The Department makes no direct payment to its catering contractor for the provision of its staff restaurants.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) his agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [200791]

Ms Rosie Winterton: None of the buildings owned by the Department has been vacant at any time during the past two years.

Drink Driving

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was to each health authority of providing medical assistance as a result of accidents on the road in which alcohol was a contributory factor in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [202906]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally.

Expenditure (Leeds)

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the allocations of *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital to Leeds primary care trusts and each of their predecessor healthcare commissioning bodies have been since 1991–92. [200136]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Revenue allocations to Leeds health authority and Leeds primary care trusts 1996–97 to 2005–06

£000

	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01
Leeds Health Authority	310,435	322,368	339,927	469,356	516,653
East Leeds PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leeds North East PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leeds North West PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leeds West PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Leeds PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

£000

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Leeds Health Authority	559,240	623,153	n/a	n/a	n/a
East Leeds PCT	n/a	n/a	151,983	165,586	179,743
Leeds North East PCT	n/a	n/a	135,571	147,704	160,333
Leeds North West PCT	n/a	n/a	145,162	158,271	172,126
Leeds West PCT	n/a	n/a	104,159	113,481	123,183
South Leeds PCT	n/a	n/a	137,550	150,173	163,518

1999–2000 was the first year of unified allocations covering Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS), prescribing and General Medical Service cash limited. These figures are not comparable with those for previous which cover HCHS only.

Operational capital allocations to Leeds primary care trusts 2003–04 to 2005–06

£000

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
East Leeds PCT	95	102	109
Leeds North East PCT	95	102	109
Leeds North West PCT	88	94	100
Leeds West PCT	74	79	85
South Leeds PCT	154	165	176

Eye Tests

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pensioners had eyesight tests *(a)* in England and *(b)* in Amber Valley in each year since 1997. [202117]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Figures for the number of sight tests by constituency and for pensioners are not collected centrally.

From 1 April 1999, we restored free sight tests under the National Health Service to those aged 60 and over. Previous to this date, records were only kept for the total number of sight tests for all patients. These figures are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: General Ophthalmic services: number of sight tests paid for in England for all patients for the years ending 31 March 1998 to 1999

	Total sight tests for all patients (million)
1997–98	6.99
1998–99	6.99

Table 2: General Ophthalmic services: number of sight tests paid by South Derbyshire health authority (HA) for all patients for the years ending 31 March 1998 to 1999

	Total sight tests for all patients (Thousand)
1997–98	85.5
1998–99	89.3

Tables 3 and 4 show the number of National Health Service sight tests paid for in England for the year 1999–2000 to 2003–04 and for South Derbyshire (HA) for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2003 and the five primary care trusts (PCTs) covering the old South Derbyshire HA for the year ending 31 March 2004.

Table 3: General Ophthalmic services: number of sight tests paid for in England for patients aged 60 and over for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2004

	Number of sight tests for aged 60 and over (Million)
1999–2000	3.3
2000–01	3.8
2001–02	4.0
2002–03	4.1
2003–04	4.3

Note:
Eligibility for NHS sight tests was extended to patients aged 60 and over from 1 April 1999.

Table 4: General ophthalmic services: number of sight tests paid by South Derbyshire HA for patients aged 60 and over for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2004

	HA and PCT	*Number of sight tests for aged 60 and over (Thousand)*
1999–2000	South Derbyshire HA	37.9
2000–01	South Derbyshire HA	43.5
2001–02	South Derbyshire HA	47.9
2002–03	South Derbyshire HA	40.7
2003–04	Amber Valley PCT	6.9
	Central Derby PCT	15.4
	Derbyshire Dales And South Derbyshire PCT	3.8
	Erewash PCT	9.5
	Greater Derby PCT	7.0

Notes:
Eligibility for NHS sight tests was extended to patients aged 60 and over from 1 April 1999. PCTs took over responsibilities from HAs in October 2002.

Sight tests can not be equated to the numbers of patients. Although most people do not come back for a sight test within the year, some patients suffering from medical conditions are advised to have re-examinations sooner.

Food Supplements

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the purpose is of the Food Standards Agency review led by Baroness Dean; what estimate he has made of the cost of the review; what account the review will take of the recent report of the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee on the performance of the Agency; and whether the Dean Review will include an assessment of the performance of that Agency in its handling of negotiations on the Food Supplements Directive. [201282]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The board of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has commissioned an external, independent review to assess whether the FSA has delivered its published objectives and, in doing so, has operated in accordance with its key values; to assess the extent to which the FSA operates effectively as a United Kingdom-wide body in a devolved policy area; and to appraise how the FSA is viewed by its stakeholders. The terms of reference of the review allow my noble Friend, the Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde as the independent reviewer to investigate the performance of the FSA in any of its functions, and to draw on any relevant evidence in so doing. The anticipated cost of the review of the FSA is between £15,000 and £25,000.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the cross-departmental research project into the impact of fuel poverty interventions on health. [199740]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Romsey (Sandra Gidley) on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 118W.

GP Lists (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average size is of general practitioners' lists in the London borough of Wandsworth. [202733]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table.

Average list size of Unrestricted Principals and Equivalents (UPEs)[1] for Wandsworth Primary Care Trust (PCT), as at 30 September 2003

Number (headcount)

	Wandsworth PCT
UPEs	174
Patients of UPEs	309,365
Average list size of UPEs	1,778

[1] UPEs include General Medical Service unrestricted principals, Personal Medical Services (PMS) contracted General Practitioners (GPs) and salaried GPs.
Patient data has been revised from previously published figures
Source:
Department of Health general and personal medical services statistics.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what qualifications health champions as defined in the White Paper, "Choosing Health", Cm 6374, will be required to hold; [199478]

(2) whether health champions as defined in the White Paper, "Choosing Health" Cm 6374 will receive a fee for their services to NHS patients. [199684]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Health champions will be people with experience and skills in developing new services across the public, voluntary and private sectors that improve health and narrow health inequalities and will not receive any fee for services to individual national health service patients.

They will provide advice and consultancy to organisations to spread good practice. We expect that this support will usually be provided on a reciprocal basis between the agencies who employ the individuals concerned. However, there may be occasions when an organisation may wish to purchase the support of a health champion for a fee in the same way that it might purchase other consultancy services.

The Improvement and Development Agency have piloted this within local government and have developed ways of accrediting people on the basis of their track record in delivering service improvements.

Health Spending (Islington)

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the level of per capita public expenditure through the NHS was in Islington on *(a)* primary care, *(b)* hospital care and *(c)* mental health for each year since 1996–97. [203287]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* Information is not available in the format requested.

Expenditure per weighted head of the population in the North Central London Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area, which includes Islington, has increased from £623.57 in 1997–98 to £1,224.67 in 2003–04.

Information on mental health spend is not collected centrally.

Notes:

This does not represent the total expenditure per head, as an element of health expenditure cannot be identified by SHA area.

The method of calculation of the total expenditure per head has changed from that used in 2002–03, so comparisons may not be appropriate.

The change in methodology is as a result of changing data collections.

Medicines

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it is his policy to support rights for patients *(a)* to refuse to accept medicines from pharmacies if they are packaged in a way that the patient believes is substandard and *(b)* to accept medicine only in the packaging intended by the manufacturer for the UK. [201681]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's policy is for medicines to be dispensed with sufficient information and advice to enable the patient to use them safely and effectively. Pharmacists should use their professional judgment and conform to the generally accepted standards of the profession to convey this information in a way, which the patient readily understands. Patients encountering any problems with National Health Service medicines supplied should discuss this further with their pharmacist or general practitioner. If a patient remains dissatisfied, he or she can lodge a formal complaint with the pharmacy or GP.

All medicines licensed for sale in the United Kingdom, including parallel imports, must comply with the UK medicines labelling regulations, which set out the information that must be provided, in English, on the product packaging. Following importation, the importer will re-label or repack the product and produce a patient information leaflet in English so that these regulations are complied with. Packaging and labelling are evaluated during the licensing process for parallel imports.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health *(1)* what discussions he has had with parallel trade associations about possible risks to patient safety from re-packaged medicines; [201684]

(2) what discussions he has had with patient organisations regarding *(a)* parallel traded medicines and *(b)* substandard and poorly repackaged medicines. [201685]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is in regular discussions with the parallel importer's trade association (British Association of European Pharmaceutical Distributors), United Kingdom marketing authorisation holders and individual parallel importers to discuss aspects of the packaging of imported medicines. This has generally been done on a case-by-case basis if issues are identified or when new requirements or guidance are introduced. The agency has not had any formal discussions with parallel trade associations regarding the possible risks to patient safety from re-packaged medicines from the parallel trade in pharmaceuticals.

To date, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has not received any representation from, nor had any discussions with patient organisations regarding any substandard and poorly repackaged medicines from the parallel trade in pharmaceuticals, nor has had any discussions specifically dealing with parallel trade in medicines.

The MHRA has received some letters from individual patients, patient carers and health professionals on the packaging of parallel imports. In these cases, the product labelling and repackaging has been reviewed and, where appropriate, the parallel importer asked to address the concern raised.

The agency has also met with the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) to advise them of its requirements relating to parallel imports so that patients and their carers can have access to accurate information about these medicines.

In licensing parallel imports, the MHRA ensures the products comply with the appropriate regulations.

The repackaging of licensed medicinal products, such as parallel imports, is controlled by the specification registered in the parallel import licence and may only be carried out by assembly sites licensed and inspected by the MHRA.

During the repackaging operation parallel importers are not permitted to change or interfere with the primary packaging of the product—that is the immediate packaging in contact with the product itself (for instance the blister packaging). However to comply with the ED labelling regulations as laid down in Title V of the Directive 2001/83/EC the importer is required to over label the immediate packaging with certain details in English and to over label or replace the outer packaging to provide additional information in English. Each product must also contain a patient information

leaflet in English. These operations may be carried out by the importer if the company holds an assembly licence, issued by MHRA after the inspecting the site. Any repackaging and re-labelling proposed by a parallel importer is considered by MHRA before a parallel import licence is issued.

MHRA operates a Defective Medicines Report Centre (DMRC) which deals with reports of defects to all medicines, including parallel imports. All reports made to the DMRC are investigated and where necessary, appropriate action taken.

MHRA would be happy to meet with any patient organisation to discuss parallel imports.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many applications for wholesale distribution licences have been declined following a criminal records inquiry by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency in each year since 2000. [201682]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Most wholesale dealer's licence applications are made in the name of a company rather than an individual. A criminal enquiry check cannot be made on a company. The Licensing Authority does not perform a criminal enquiry check on an individual.

Records held by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority show that two applications for a wholesale dealer's licence have been refused since 1 January 2000 because the proposed premises in their application were unsuitable for the distribution of medicinal products.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many parallel traders have *(a)* been prosecuted, *(b)* been reprimanded and *(c)* had their licences revoked by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency in each year since 2000. [201683]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Records held by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency have identified that, from the 1 January 2000, no licensed wholesale dealers, who are involved in the business of parallel import trading of medicinal products, have been prosecuted, or reprimanded, or have been issued a formal caution for a medicines legislation offence.

During the same period, four wholesale dealers that were involved in the business of parallel import trading of medicinal products have had their wholesale dealer's licence revoked as a result of breaching the conditions of their licence.

Mental Health Services (Harrow)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken to replace the mental health counselling services in Harrow provided by MIND following the closure of that facility. [203218]

Dr. Ladyman: In accordance with our policy of "Shifting the balance of Power", primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for commissioning care to get the best services for local people, subject to the highest clinical standards and best value for money. It is for each PCT to decide what money it allocates to each particular strand of its local health service according to their assessment of local need.

I therefore suggest that the hon. Member liaises directly with his local PCT on this matter.

Musculoskeletal Diseases

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the general practitioner consultation and referral rates were for musculoskeletal diseases, including pain management, but excluding osteoarthritis in each English primary care trust in the last year for which figures are available; what the population served by each English primary care trust is; and if he will make a statement. [202525]

Dr. Ladyman: The data on general practitioner consultations and referrals is not available.

Detailed statistics on the numbers of people registered with a GP in each primary care organisation are routinely published on the Department of Health's website at http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/stats/population/index.htm

Myasthenia Gravis

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his plans to support those who are diagnosed with myasthenia gravis. [203017]

Dr. Ladyman: There is no cure for myasthenia gravis, but it is treated with medication, surgery as appropriate and palliation.

The national service framework for long-term conditions will focus on improving services for people with neurological conditions and addressing some of the common issues that can promote independence for people with other long-term conditions. It will apply to services across England and the people that receive treatment, care and support at these services.

Neonatal Care

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish his response to the report of the neonatal intensive care services review group; and if he will make a statement. [200109]

Dr. Ladyman: The conclusions of this review were put to national consultation between April and July 2003. The review suggested establishing formal managed clinical networks to deliver neonatal intensive care and this was supported in the consultation. Primary care trusts are now working with neonatal specialist commissioners and strategic health authorities to establish the optimum configuration to provide local services for all babies, with clinically managed access to specialist facilities for those babies who require intensive care.

Newborn Hearing Screening

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the *(a)* information and *(b)* support provided to the families of deaf children identified through newborn hearing screening. [201673]

Dr. Ladyman: The information provided to the families of deaf children identified by newborn hearing screening was developed in collaboration with the

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) and is available in leaflet form, covering assessment, diagnosis, and provision of services, including education and social services. There is also a NDCS helpline. This is supplemented by local services taking advantage of the early support programme as it rolls out across local authorities. It is for local managers to satisfy themselves that the provision of information, services and support to individual families and their children by the National Health Service and local authorities is effective, in line with priorities and is of high quality.

Psychiatric Wards (Young People)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure young people being held on adult psychiatric wards receive treatment by staff who are specifically trained to support them and their families. [200340]

Dr. Ladyman: The child and adolescent mental health standard of the recently published children's national service framework (NSF) has a marker of good practice that states

> "All staff working directly with children and young people have sufficient knowledge, training and support to promote the psychological well-being of children, young people and their families and to identify indicators of good practice".

The NSF also recognises that specific training is needed for adult mental health professionals to enable them to be aware of the developmental needs of young adults making the transition across services.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many young people have been held on adult psychiatric wards in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [200343]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Placing adolescents on adult psychiatric wards is sometimes necessary and acceptable for clinical or practical reasons. The recently published children's national service framework (NSF) sets a standard that

> '. . . young people who require admission to hospital for mental health care have access to appropriate care in an environment suited to their age and development'.

The Government are committed to delivering the standards set out in the NSF and is investing an additional £300 million to improve child and adolescent mental health services.

Video Conferencing Units

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department, *(b)* the NHS and *(c)* each non-departmental public body for which his Department has oversight; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [201263]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has a total of 14 video conferencing studios in its London and Leeds buildings. There are a further nine mobile video conferencing facilities in meeting rooms and 11 desktop video conferencing units in departmental buildings.

Video conferencing utilisation is monitored closely to ensure maximum benefit is obtained. The market is reviewed to assess developments and costs as well as to ensure departmental business can be conducted satisfactorily.

Use of video conferencing within the national health service is a local operational matter for individual NHS trusts. Figures on numbers on video conferencing units within the NHS are not collected centrally.

Figures on numbers of video conferencing units within non-departmental public bodies is not collected centrally.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academic Performance

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what Government-funded research is being undertaken of the effects on academic performance linked of an increase in sport activity. [202571]

Mr. Miliband: The Department has funded the University of Warwick to complete a study of specialist schools including sports colleges. Published on 25 November, in parallel to the Specialist Schools Trust national conference, it found that specialist status is a "powerful lever for school improvement associated with raising academic performance". Sports colleges' attainment is increasing more than average. Since 1997, sports colleges have raised their attainment from 41 per cent. to 48.7 per cent.(a rate of increase almost twice the national average. The full report and a summary are now available at www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR587.pdf and www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RB587.pdf.

In addition, as part of the national strategy for PE, school sport and club links we are currently funding:

1. The Youth Sport Trust to carry out a Sports College Research Project. This comprises a national survey of sports colleges and individual school based research;

2. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to investigate the difference that high quality PE and school sport make to young people and the impact that this has on their schools.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is a condition of the Building Schools for the Future programme that proposals include the establishment of at least one academy; and if he will make a statement. [201592]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The departmental guidance document, Building Schools for the Future—A new approach to capital investment, issued in February 2004 states: "The Government will expect an evaluation of the potential for Academies to form an integral part of plans, and bold innovation in the use of Academies will help proposals progress quickly to approval."

Exeter University

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will take action to prevent the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202617]

(2) what plans *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the Higher Education Funding Council have to intervene to prevent the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter University; [202620]

(3) what steps he proposes to take to prevent the closure of undergraduate chemistry provision in universities; [202627]

(4) if he will make a statement on the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision. [202629]

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps he proposes to take to prevent the closure of undergraduate chemistry provision in universities; [202646]

(2) if he will make a statement on the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202647]

(3) if he will take action to prevent the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202649]

(4) what plans *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the Higher Education Funding Council has to intervene to prevent the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter University. [202652]

Dr. Howells: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. Whether or not to close undergraduate chemistry provision is therefore a matter for Exeter University alone. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is monitoring the situation closely.

I have asked HEFCE to advise me on higher education subjects or courses of national strategic importance, including science subjects, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them. HEFCE will be entering into a strategic dialogue with universities, colleges, employers and other partners to consider this matter.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received concerning the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter University from *(a)* the Royal Society of Chemistry, *(b)* the South West Regional Development Agency, *(c)* companies operating in the South West and *(d)* others; and if he will make a statement. [202618]

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received from *(a)* the Royal Society of Chemistry, *(b)* the South West Regional Development Agency, *(c)* companies operating in the South West and *(d)* others concerning the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter University; and if he will make a statement. [202650]

Dr. Howells: I met the Royal Society of Chemistry on Wednesday 1 December to discuss the closure and its wider implications. I have received no representations from the South West RDA, nor from companies in the South West, although I understand that a local company has made representations to the Royal Society of Chemistry. A number of parents and students have been in touch with the Department via e-mail, telephone calls and letters.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. I understand that Exeter University is working very closely with the students to ensure that all their individual needs are met. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is monitoring the situation closely.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what discussions he has had with Ministerial colleagues in *(a)* the Department for Trade and Industry and *(b)* the Treasury about the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202623]

(2) what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in *(a)* the Department for Trade and Industry and *(b)* the Treasury about the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision. [202655]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State and I have discussed the implications of the Exeter announcement with the Science Minister, Lord Sainsbury. Our Departments are working together with the Higher Education Funding Council for England to monitor the situation closely.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether his Department has been informed of university chemistry departments other than that at Exeter University that may be in financial difficulty; [202626]

(2) whether his Department has been informed of university chemistry departments other than that at Exeter University that may be in financial difficulty. [202645]

Dr. Howells: We have not been informed of any other university chemistry department that may be in financial difficulty. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. However, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has a rigorous and well established system for keeping the financial health of all HEIs under review and will monitor this closely.

Children Act

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the duties of independent schools will be under the terms of the Children Act 2004. [203279]

Mr. Miliband: The Children Act 2004 does not put duties on independent schools in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. However, it will affect the way that they carry out their

duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils under S157 of the 2002 Education Act and the 2003 Standards Regulations.

Section 12 of The Children Act 2004 provides for the establishment of a national network of databases, or Indexes, to support better information sharing about the needs of children between practitioners working in children's services. These databases will contain basic identifying data for each child, contact details for professionals working with the child and a facility to indicate that a professional has a concern about a child. Proprietors of independent schools are under a duty to disclose information to Indexes once they are established.

I will write to the hon. Member with a fuller explanation.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who is responsible for the *(a)* education and *(b)* welfare of children permanently excluded from schools; and how these responsibilities will be monitored under the terms of the Children Act 2004. [203280]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: When a permanent exclusion is confirmed by the school's governing body (or by an independent appeal panel), the pupil's name is taken off the school roll and the LEA for the area in which the pupil resides is responsible for providing him or her with suitable education in another school or elsewhere. Parents or carers have responsibility for the welfare of their child whilst he or she is excluded from school.

Inspections of children's services under the Children Act 2004 will report on the well- being of all children and young people in a local area. This will include inspecting the arrangements made to ensure that those children who have been permanently excluded from school attend appropriate alternative settings aimed at securing re- integration into mainstream provision or work.

Children's Services

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance he has issued to *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* health services and *(c)* criminal justice services on working with voluntary and community services organisations to deliver better services to children. [202965]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: A draft of the statutory guidance on the duty to cooperate to improve children's well-being (section 10 (8) of the Children Act 2004) is currently being prepared and will be available for consultation shortly. This will make clear the Government's expectation that voluntary and community organisations should be represented at all levels of local cooperation arrangements. Local authorities and their relevant partners—district councils, the police, the probation service, youth offending teams, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts, Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council for England—must have regard to this guidance. Further non-statutory guidance on good practice and toolkits are also being prepared.

The importance of working with the voluntary and community sectors is also highlighted in draft statutory guidance on sections 18 and 19 of the Children Act 2004 (Director of Children's Services and Lead Member) currently out for consultation, and will be referenced in draft regulations and non-statutory guidance in relation to section 17 (Children and Young People's Plans) which is intended to be issued for consultation early in 2005. Consultation documents can be accessed at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations.

The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme was launched in December 2004—details can be found at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk. At the same time, the Department published a strategy for working with the voluntary and community sectors to deliver change for children and young people. This sets a framework within which local authorities, other public sector partners at national, regional and local level, and voluntary and community organisations can work together to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost to his Department was of advertising and publicity services in each of the last five years. [201680]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Expenditure on the Departments central Advertising and Publicity Budget is set out in the following table. In addition to expenditure from this central budget, expenditure from budgets allocated to individual programmes will also include spend on publicity related activity. It is not possible, except at disproportionate cost, to separately identify all such publicity related expenditure. It is, however, possible to identify separately the Department's total expenditure on advertising, and this is also set out in the following table.

Advertising and publicity budget		*Total departmental spend on advertising*	
	£000		*£000*[1]
1999–2000	9,902	1999–2000	11,900
2000–01	14,595	2000–01	29,066
2001–02	11,688	2001–02	20,489
2002–03	14,089	2002–03	11,261
2003–04	15,500	2003–04	11,210

[1] These figures include spend on advertising from the central Advertising and Publicity Budget

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* PFI projects in his Department for each of the last two years. [200817]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department has no new builds, demolition rebuilds or PFI projects under construction.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [200818]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The cost of criminal damage against the Department's buildings where the police were involved was approximately £450 in 2003 and £2,018 in 2004.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [200821]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The estimated cost of building refurbishment carried out in my Department in each of the last two years is as follows:

	£
2003–04	2,106,720
2002–03	3,442,935

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of refurbishing each Ministerial Private Office was in each of the last two years. [200822]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The cost of refurbishment in Ministerial Offices in each of the last two years is as follows:

	£
2002–03	1,480
2003–04	15,775

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [200825]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department organises a large number of events for different target audiences and purposes each year, ranging from small scale workshops to introduce practitioners to new procedures or initiatives, to larger scale events to promote policy initiatives or present the bigger picture of the Department's activities to external partners and opinion formers.

Examples of these during the past year include ministerial events in each Government office region to discuss implications and implementation of the departmental Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners with a range of stakeholders.

Records of events sponsored by the Department are not held centrally and the information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [200833]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total external spending by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200834]

Mr. Miliband: The total external spend by the Department on consultants in support of public private partnerships (PPPs) and private finance initiatives (PFI) in the last two years is shown in the following table:

£000

	2002–03	*2003–04*
PPPs	110	130
PFI	370	214
Total spend on consultants	480	344

During the period 2002–03 and 2003–04, the Department used eight consultancy firms and a number of individual consultants in support of PPP and PFI projects.

The information requested regarding the number of full-time equivalent consultants employed over the period, the number of billed consultancy days per year and the implied average cost of each PFI consultant is not available and could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Properties

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) his agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [200820]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department has had no empty properties in 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Note:

The Department has no agencies and other public bodies do not own any empty properties.

Education (Hendon)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many extra 16 to 18-year-olds he expects to stay in education in Hendon as a result of the education maintenance allowance; and if he will make a statement. [203596]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since the start of the academic year, as of 31 October 2004, 544 young people in the Barnet local authority area have received payments under the national EMA scheme. The number is increasing at a steady rate and we expect it to continue to do so. In 2004/05 across England we expect the number of 16 to 18-year-olds participating in education to increase by 35,000 (3.8 percentage points) as a direct result of EMA. By 2006/07, when EMA is available to all eligible 16 to 18-year-olds, an additional 72,000 young people will be in further education. If the same participation increase

is applied to the London region an additional 9,700 16 to18-year-olds will be participating in further education by 2006/07. Estimates are not available at local authority level.

Education Bodies

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost is to his Department to date of *(a)* the Specialist Schools Trust, *(b)* the National College for School Leadership and *(c)* the Teacher Training Agency; what the costs of equivalent services were in 1997; and how many staff are employed by each body. [201138]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the total grant allocated to the Specialist Schools Trust, the National College for School Leadership and the Teacher Training Agency to date for 2004–05; the equivalent funding for 1997–98; and the total number of staff employed by each body in 2004–05.

The Specialist Schools Trust's services, including those funded by the Government, have developed to reflect the significant expansion in specialist schools, 257 schools in 1997 to 1,956 schools in 2004, and the extra opportunities presented by a mainly specialist system.

In March 2004, the TTA's remit was expanded to include:

the wider school work force, moving further towards securing comprehensive training and development for all school support staff;

being a key partner in the new strategic network representing all staff working with children and young people that is being established in response to "Every Child Matters", and

strengthening its contribution to teachers' Continuing Professional Development.

DfES grant (cash terms)

£000

	1997–98	2004–05	Current FTE staff
Specialist Schools Trust	678	12,452	70
National College for School Leadership	—	116,675	246
Teacher Training Agency	211,303	564,151	256

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.
2. NCSL was established in 2000 and there was no equivalent agency in 1997.
3. TTA 2004–05 grant in aid figures are based on allocations made for the year between 1 April and 29 November 2004.
4. TTA current FTE staff figure includes employment of 20 temporary agency staff.

EU Regulation

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [200831]

Dr. Howells: Since November 2002 the following EU directives and regulations have been implemented by the Department for Education and Skills.

The Department for Education and Skills has responsibility for implementing directive 92/51/EEC on a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training. UK regulations which give effect to directive 92/51/EEC, were drafted and came into force on 1 January 2003 (S.I. 2002/2934). These regulations consolidated and re-enacted previous implementing UK regulations and made some amendments. The regulations apply to all professions which are regulated by law or public authority. They provide for a scheme for the recognition of qualifications of migrants from member states of the European Community (or from Iceland, Norway, Lichtenstein or Switzerland) seeking to take up or pursue a profession which is regulated in the UK.

The cost to public funds was the cost of drafting the implementing UK legislation. The Department does not generally hold cost information in this form.

The cost of implementation to businesses takes the form of administrative costs to the regulatory authorities who administer the process of recognition. These bodies are able to levy an administration fee upon individuals for the processing of applications for recognition.

In addition, the DfES took over responsibility for directive 89/48/EEC, First General System for Recognition of Professional Qualifications, and directive 99/42/EC, Third General System for the Recognition of Qualifications and Experience, from the DTI in August 2003. This gives the DfES the entire responsibility for the general system of recognition of professional qualifications and education. These directives have not required implementing UK legislation since the responsibility transferred to the DfES.

Foreign Language Teachers

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what steps have been taken to recruit foreign language teachers for primary schools. [202909]

Mr. Miliband: There has been considerable progress on the development of language learning in primary schools, underpinned by the launch in December 2002 of the Government's National Languages Strategy for England. The Strategy recognises the importance of developing a workforce to implement primary language learning, and much of our work to date has focussed on this area.

In developing a school workforce, we are building up a cadre of both specialist teachers and non-teacher specialists to support primary language learning. 580 places have been allocated this year for Primary Initial Teacher Training with a specialism in French, German, Spanish or Italian, and we intend to expand this programme further next year. This means that over 1,200 teacher trainees will have been trained by the end of this year. In addition we have allocated 50 primary MFL places a year to the Graduate Teacher Programme.

For existing teachers, we have funded primary MFL Advanced Skills Teacher posts and are working with the TTA to develop and pilot CPD courses for existing primary teachers to enhance language skills and MFL pedagogy.

For non-teacher specialists, we are working with the British Council to extend the foreign language assistants programme into primary schools, and are developing training for teaching assistants to support primary language learning.

Head Teachers

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, if he will list head teachers by *(a)* race and *(b)* gender in (i) England, (ii) each region and (iii) each local education authority. [202910]

Mr. Miliband: Information on the ethnic origin of head teachers is not collected centrally.

The following table gives the number of full-time regular head teachers by gender for maintained sector schools in England listed by region and local education authority at March 2003, (the latest information available by gender).

The information is taken from the Database of Teachers' Records a database maintained primarily for pensions purposes. LEAs are shown as not available where data are insufficiently complete to be reliable. National and regional totals show data for all LEAs.

Numbers of full time regular head teachers in service in maintained sector schools, March 2003 (Provisional)

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
Darlington	20	30	50
Hartlepool	20	20	40
Middlesbrough	n/a	n/a	n/a
Redcar and Cleveland	30	40	70
Stockton on Tees	50	40	90
Durham	150	170	320
Northumberland	80	130	220
Gateshead	30	50	80
Newcastle upon Tyne	n/a	n/a	n/a
North Tyneside	40	40	80
South Tyneside	30	30	60
Sunderland	10	10	10
North East	460	550	1,020
Blackburn with Darwen	20	50	70
Blackpool	20	20	40
Halton	n/a	n/a	n/a
Warrington	60	40	100
Cheshire	160	170	330
Cumbria	150	180	330
Bolton	60	70	130
Bury	50	30	80
Manchester	80	90	170
Oldham	50	70	120
Rochdale	50	60	110
Salford	n/a	n/a	n/a
Stockport	50	90	140
Tameside	50	60	110
Trafford	40	50	90
Wigan	50	70	120
Lancashire	320	340	660
Knowsley	n/a	n/a	n/a
Liverpool	n/a	n/a	n/a
St Helens	40	40	80
Sefton	70	60	130
Wirral	60	80	140
North West	1,500	1,730	3,220
East Riding of Yorkshire	80	80	160
City of Kingston Upon Hull	50	60	110
North East Lincolnshire	30	50	80
North Lincolnshire	40	50	90
York	40	30	70
North Yorkshire	170	220	390
Barnsley	n/a	n/a	n/a
Doncaster	70	70	140
Rotherham	50	80	140
Sheffield	90	110	200

Numbers of full time regular head teachers in service in maintained sector schools, March 2003 (Provisional)

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
Bradford	80	120	200
Calderdale	40	50	100
Kirklees	80	110	180
Leeds	120	170	290
Wakefield	70	90	160
Yorkshire and the Number	1,000	1,290	2,290
Derby	20	20	40
Leicester	30	30	70
Nottingham	80	90	170
Rutland	1–	10	10
Derbyshire	190	250	440
Leicestershire	150	150	290
Lincolnshire	170	160	330
Northamptonshire	150	200	350
Nottinghamshire	220	170	390
East Midlands	1,000	1,090	2,090
Herefordshire	60	50	100
Stoke on Trent	50	60	110
Telford and Wrekin	30	50	80
Shropshire	90	80	170
Staffordshire	220	210	420
Warwickshire	100	160	260
Birmingham	190	290	480
Coventry	70	60	130
Dudley	60	50	110
Sandwell	70	60	130
Solihull	100	90	190
Walsall	60	70	130
Wolverhampton	60	60	120
Worcestershire	120	160	280
West Midlands	1,260	1,450	2,710
Luton	20	60	80
Peterborough	30	40	70
Southend on Sea	20	40	60
Thurrock	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bedfordshire	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cambridgeshire	90	170	260
Essex	220	360	570
Hertfordshire	170	310	480
Norfolk	200	260	460
Suffolk	150	190	340
East of England	950	1,560	2,510
Camden	10	50	60
City of London	1–	1–	1–
Hackney	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hammersmith and Fulham	20	40	50
Haringey	20	60	00
Islington	20	30	50
Kensington and Chelsea	2–	20	30
Lambeth	20	30	50
Lewisham	20	50	70
Newham	30	70	90
Southwark	10	10	20
Tower Hamlets	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wandsworth	30	50	80
City of Westminster	n/a	n/a	n/a
Barking and Dagenham	20	40	60
Barnet	40	70	110
Bexley	30	50	80
Brent	20	50	70
Bromley	n/a	n/a	n/a
Croydon	50	90	140
Ealing	30	60	80
Enfield	30	60	90
Greenwich	n/a	n/a	n/a
Harrow	20	50	70
Havering	40	50	80
Hillingdon	50	40	90
Hounslow	20	60	80
Kingston upon Thames	n/a	n/a	n/a
Merton	n/a	n/a	n/a
Redbridge	30	50	80
Richmond upon Thames	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sutton	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waltham Forest	20	70	90
London	700	1,290	2,000
Bracknell Forest	10	30	40
Brighton and Hove	30	50	80
Isle of Wight	20	40	70

Numbers of full time regular head teachers in service in maintained sector schools, March 2003 (Provisional)

	Male	Female	Total
Medway	40	60	100
Milton Keynes	50	60	110
Portsmouth	20	50	70
Reading	20	40	60
Slough	20	30	50
Southampton	30	50	80
West Berkshire	20	60	80
Windsor and Maidenhead	20	50	60
Wokingham	20	50	70
Buckinghamshire	100	140	240
East Sussex	80	100	180
Hampshire	180	310	490
Kent	260	310	570
Oxfordshire	120	180	310
Surrey	130	290	420
West Sussex	120	190	310
South East	1,280	2,090	3,370
Bath and North East Somerset	30	60	90
Bournemouth	10	[1]	10
City of Bristol	70	100	170
North Somerset	40	30	80
Plymouth	60	50	110
Poole	20	30	50
South Gloucestershire	60	60	120
Swindon	10	20	40
Torbay	30	20	40
Cornwall	150	150	300
Isles of Scilly	[1]	[1]	[1]
Devon	180	200	380
Dorset	80	100	180
Gloucestershire	130	170	300
Somerset	150	140	280
Wiltshire	90	160	250
South West	1,100	1,270	2,370
England	9,260	12,320	21,580

n/a Not available
[1] Nil or less than 5

Increased Flexibility Programme

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the 14–16 Increased Flexibility programme will be continued; and if he will make a statement. [203594]

Mr. Miliband: An announcement will be made shortly.

Islington Schools

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much his Department spent on *(a)* pre-school, *(b)* primary school and *(c)* secondary schools in the Borough of Islington for each year since 1996–97; and how much was spent by the London borough of Islington from locally-generated revenue. [203286]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The Department funds Local Education Authorities and it is for them to decide how that funding is allocated within their area. Information relating to the spending on pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in Islington Education Authority is provided in the following table. Locally generated revenue data is not collected by my Department.

Combined LEA and school based net expenditure[1] by Islington LEA 1996–97 to 2002–03[2].

	Pre-primary education	Primary education	Pre-primary and Primary education	Secondary education	Overall LEA and school based expenditure
1996–97	n/a	n/a	41,104,000	25,845,000	86,049,000
1997–98[3]	n/a	n/a	43,454,000	26,575,000	88,659,000
1998–99[3]	n/a	n/a	46,950,000	27,161,000	94,361,000
1999–2000[3]	6,524,000	44,570,000	51,094,000	29,607,000	93,160,000
2000–01	7,786,000	49,511,000	57,298,000	35,857,000	103,392,000
2001–02	8,223,000	53,576,000	61,799,000	42,826,000	115,651,000
2002–03[1, 4]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	112,676,000

[1] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA). A sector breakdown for combined LEA and school based expenditure is not available in 2002–03 due to the redesign of the Section 52 Outturn Table A where central LEA expenditure is no longer split by phase.

[2] 1999–00 saw a change in data source when the data collection moved from the RO1 form collected by the ODPM to the Section 52 form from the DfES. 2002–03 saw a further break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) and the associated restructuring of the outturn tables. The change in sources is shown by the dotted line.

[3] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central Government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99. The 1999–00 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.

[4] In 2002–03 Islington LEA were one of a group of LEAs whose net current expenditure was lower than expected. It is suspected that this was caused by the misreporting of funding in the income column of their 2002–03 Outturn Statement Table A.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest1,000 as reported by the LEA. n-a = not available

Literacy/Numeracy

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* Key Stage 2 pupils and *(b)* Key Stage 3 pupils reached the required standards in both literacy and numeracy in each year since 1997 in (i) Haltemprice and Howden and (ii) England. [203527]

Mr. Miliband: The percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils achieving level 4 or above in English and mathematics for 1997–2003 are set out in the following table:

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Haltemprice and Howden:							
English	69.2	72.0	76.8	84.3	82.0	81.9	79.7
Mathematics	70.0	70.6	76.3	79.2	77.2	80.0	77.5
England:							
English	63	65	71	75	75	75	75
Mathematics	62	59	69	72	71	73	73

The percentage of Key Stage 3 pupils achieving level 5 or above in English and mathematics for 1997–2003 are set out in the following table:

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Haltemprice and Howden:							
English	64.9	68.4	66.6	68.9	66.7	69.8	76.9
Mathematics	69.0	64.7	70.0	73.7	72.2	71.5	72.8
England:							
English	57	65	64	64	65	67	69
Mathematics	60	59	62	65	66	67	71

Figures for 2004 by Parliamentary Constituency are not yet available, but will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

OECD PISA Survey 2003

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what reasons were given by the schools in England which refused to take part in the OECD PISA 2003 survey for their decision not to take part. [203171]

Mr. Miliband: The Department's contractor, ONS, gained some insights from contacts with schools while seeking their agreement to take part about why they did not wish to participate in PISA 2003. The most common reason for refusal was the teaching staff time required in co-ordinating the school's participation in the studies. Schools also said that they received too many requests from a number of different sources to take part in surveys. The PISA rules require that testing takes place in the spring or summer terms and, as the sample was of 15–16 year olds, many sampled pupils were in their GCSE year and even the half a day's testing required by PISA was seen as a distraction from their preparation.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what reasons were given by schools which took part in the OECD PISA 2003 survey for excluding certain pupils from the survey. [203172]

Mr. Miliband: PISA is a voluntary survey and relies on the co-operation of both schools and students. Schools which participated in PISA did not have a role in excluding eligible students. Some students declined to take part in the survey as their participation was voluntary and some students who agreed to take part in PISA were absent on the day of testing.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions officials from the Office for National Statistics have had with officials from the Department for Education and Skills regarding the OECD PISA 2003 survey. [203179]

Mr. Miliband: As the Department's contractor for PISA 2000 and 2003, the ONS has had an ongoing and close relationship with DFES over a number of years. This has included regular project management meetings and updates on PISA as appropriate to the stage of the survey.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 1 December, *Official Report*, column 147W on International Student Assessment Study, what the response rate of *(a)* schools and *(b)* pupils in the sample of English schools selected was for (i) the OECD PISA survey 2000 and (ii) the OECD PISA survey 2003. [203216]

Mr. Miliband: The school and pupil response rates for England for PISA 2000 and 2003 are set out in the following table.

	School Response—before replacement	*School Response—after replacement*	*Pupil Response*
PISA 2000	59	82	81
PISA 2003	64	77	77

Permanent Exclusions (Fines)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local education authorities issue fines to schools for permanent exclusion. [202973]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Schools are not fined for permanently excluding a pupil. Some local education authorities deduct an amount of money (over and above the amount prescribed in regulations) from the excluding school's budget to help pay for the excluded pupil's suitable education elsewhere. Information on which LEAs do this is not held centrally.

School Building Programme

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the progress of local education authorities in wave one of Building Schools for the Future. [202964]

Mr. Miliband: The local education authorities involved in wave one of Building Schools for the Future are making good progress with their plans. Projects are being developed in secondary schools in Bradford, Bristol, Greenwich, Gateshead, Knowsley, Lancashire, Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Newham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sheffield, Solihull, Stoke-on-Trent, Southwark, Sunderland and Waltham Forest.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his evidence to the Education and Skills Select Committee of Wednesday 1 December, what the evidential basis is for his

statement that a brand new school building improves educational performance; and to what extent that evidence has been disaggregated from other factors with particular reference to *(a)* exclusions, *(b)* new leadership and *(c)* improved staffing. [203784]

Mr. Miliband: In 1999, my Department commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to evaluate the relationship between schools capital investment and pupil performance. This was published in 2000 as Research Report 242 "Building Performance". Further research was then carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers which we published in 2003 as Research Report 407 "Building Better Performance". These studies showed quantitative evidence of a positive and statistically significant relationship between capital investment and pupil performance. Investment included both new schools and improvements to existing buildings, and positive evidence was strongest in relation to investment that supported better delivery of the curriculum. This statistical work included correlation and multivariate analysis to take account of other influences on performance such as those you mention and, indeed, a range of other factors.

The qualitative analysis also suggested a much greater positive impact of capital spending on pupil achievement, mainly through the boost it gives to teacher and pupil morale and hence the quality of teaching and learning.

These research reports are available in the House Library.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money his Department is budgeting to spend on the Voluntary Aided Schools Capital Programme in 2004–05; and how much has been spent so far. [203789]

Mr. Miliband: The Department has budgeted to spend £520 million against capital projects in voluntary aided (VA) schools, and we expect this to be fully spent. At the end of November 2004 the Department had paid £288 million in response to claims made by VA schools.

School Staff Profile

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* teachers and *(b)* other school staff in England are from (i) other EU countries, (ii) Commonwealth countries and (iii) other countries. [202991]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Science Teachers

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the impact on the future supply of school science teachers of the closure of the chemistry department at Exeter University; and if he will make a statement. [200633]

Dr. Howells: We regularly monitor the supply of teachers, including in science, through the Teacher Training Agency and shall continue to do so. Monitoring the impact of the closure of university science courses would be part of that process. Between January 2001 and January 2004, the number of science teacher vacancies in secondary schools fell by 40 per cent. The Government also continue to pay £4,000 Golden Hellos to eligible science teachers entering the profession. This will rise to £5,000 for those entering teacher training from September 2005.

Sector Skills Development Agency

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the contribution of the Sector Skills Development Agency towards increasing skills and productivity in industry. [200955]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The SSDA was established in July 2002 with the remit to develop, regulate, and support a network of 25 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) which I anticipate will be in place by the summer of 2005.

The SSDA plays an essential role in ensuring that each SSC has the capability to develop a forward looking skills agenda to help raise skills levels in the public and private sectors and to drive productivity improvement in the industry sectors they represent. It ensures essential cross sector and generic skill issues such as management and leadership are addressed and undertakes important research on the linkages between skills and productivity.

The SSDA is currently in the process of agreeing its Strategic Plan for 2005–08 with Government. This will include a framework of key performance measures centred Around—higher performance working practices; reduction of skills gaps; increased participation in job-related training; the introduction of sector specific Sector Skills Agreements (SSAs) and increased awareness of the Skills for Business network. The SSDA will shortly agree the first four UK wide Sector Skills Agreements (SSAs).

SSAs will be the primary means by which industry articulates and helps deliver the specific skills that individual's need sector by sector to drive improvements to productivity and competitiveness. A further six SSAs were announced on 16 November and eventually all 25 SSCs will have an SSA.

The Skills for Business network in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council has and continues to develop engagement with many large businesses with business leaders playing a key role on SSC boards

Student Finance

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, if he will make a statement on student loans for students who are on NHS-funded courses. [202568]

Dr. Howells: Students in England who are attending NHS-funded DipHE nursing, midwifery or operating department practitioner courses, and postgraduate level courses, are not eligible for student loans but are eligible for non means-tested NHS bursaries. Students in England who are attending NHS funded degree courses are eligible to apply for means-tested NHS bursaries and for a reduced, non means-tested student loan.

English domiciled students attending standard medical and dental degree courses may apply for full-rate student loans for the first four years of their courses. For the fifth and subsequent years of their courses they can apply for means-tested NHS bursaries, and a reduced, non-means-tested student loan. English domiciled students on fast-track graduate entry medical degree courses can apply for a full student loan in year one. For years two to four of their course, they are eligible to apply for means-tested NHS bursaries and a reduced, non means-tested student loan.

Teachers

Mr. Collins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to enable newly qualified teachers in the UK to qualify immediately for qualified teacher status for the purposes of EC Directive 89/48 EEC; what discussions he has held with other EU education ministers on making teaching qualifications precisely reciprocal; and if he will make a statement. [203770]

Mr. Miliband: EC Directive 89/48 EEC does not apply to the qualifications of teachers trained in the UK. The position in England is that teacher trainees are awarded qualified teacher status by the General Teaching Council for England as soon as the training provider has recommended that they have met all the standards required for this award.

For England and Wales, we have implemented the Directive on the mutual recognition of qualifications under the European Communities (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 1991, by making the Secretary of State for Education and Skills the designated authority for the purpose of recognising the qualifications of teachers trained in the European Economic Area and Switzerland. As a matter of current practice, the status of any teacher certified as qualified by the member State in which they trained is recognised as equivalent to qualified teacher status in England and Wales. We have not met other EU Ministers to discuss teacher qualifications.

Truancy

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils played truant in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [199915]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Undergraduate Chemistry Teaching

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if the Higher Education Funding Council will change the funding formulae to provide Exeter university with more money for undergraduate chemistry provision; [202621]

(2) what plans the Higher Education Funding Council has to change the funding formulae for financing undergraduate chemistry provision. [202622]

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if the Higher Education Funding Council will change the funding formulae to provide Exeter university with more money for undergraduate chemistry provision; [202653]

(2) what plans the Higher Education Funding Council has to change the funding formulae for financing undergraduate chemistry provision. [202654]

Dr. Howells: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is about to launch a fundamental review of the teaching funding method in advance of the introduction of variable tuition fees. The review will involve wide consultation with the sector. It will include consideration of the impact of the current funding method on different types of provision, such as undergraduate science, including chemistry.

Verwood Trinity School

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when his Department will pay the debt of £200,000 incurred in respect of works at Verwood Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided First School. [203790]

Mr. Miliband: The additional costs that currently have been met by Dorset county council were not planned within the capital programme for voluntary aided schools. Our current indications are that we cannot meet these unforeseen costs because we expect the available budget to be needed to meet existing agreed commitments, but we will review again the position towards the end of the financial year, when we will have a clearer picture of whether any funding may be available.

Veterinary Medicine

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been granted to UK *(a)* veterinary colleges and *(b)* training places in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [200734]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: The actual amounts of recurrent funding paid by the HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) to the Royal Veterinary College from 1998–99 to 2004–05 are set out in the following table.

£

Academic year	*Total grant*
1998/99	7,902,287
1999/2000	9,528,988
2000/01	9,792,798
2001/02	10,936,725
2002/03	12,100,000
2003/04	14,400,000
2004/05	16,000,000

There are in addition three other higher education institutions in England offering courses in veterinary science. Bristol, Cambridge and Liverpool. Table B following shows the notional amounts of grant paid in total to these institutions.

£

Academic year	Total notional grant
1998/99	11,100,000
1999/2000	12,800,000
2000/01	14,300,000
2001/02	15,300,000
2002/03	15,000,000
2003/04	17,000,000

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 439W, for details of the estimated numbers of students on veterinary sciences courses.

Vocational Education and Training

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to expand vocational education and training for adults in Hendon; and if he will make a statement. [203595]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Working Mothers

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of first time mothers returned to work within *(a)* four, *(b)* six, *(c)* nine and *(d)* 12 months of the birth of their child in the last year for which figures are available. [201906]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Brook, dated 9 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the proportion of first-time mothers returning to work after the birth of their child. (201906)

Whilst statistics for first-time mothers are not available, data are available for all mothers. This shows that:

(a) 37 per cent. of mothers returned to work within four months

(b) 55 per cent. of mothers returned to work within six months

(c) 77 per cent. of mothers returned to work within nine months

(d) 83 per cent. of mothers returned to work within twelve months.

(e) A further 15 per cent. of mothers did not intend to return to work.

The data source is the DTI/DWP Maternity and Paternity Rights Survey, conducted with mothers who gave birth in January 2001. This was before the extension of statutory ordinary maternity leave (from 18 to 26 weeks, paid), and introduction of statutory additional maternity leave (26 weeks, unpaid), in April 2003. The data are only available as percentages and not as population totals.

As with all sample surveys, these estimates are subject to sampling variation.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Autism

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will designate autism as a distinct neurological condition to be addressed through a specific programme of care, separate from existing mental health and learning disability structures. [201941]

Angela Smith: Policy and services for children and adults with autism are currently being examined under the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (N.I.). The Review will recommend how future service delivery should be managed and funded.

Charter Boats

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what grants are available to enable owners of charter boats in Northern Ireland to *(a)* upgrade their vessels and *(b)* enhance their facilities for tourists. [202866]

Mr. Gardiner: Government do not currently deliver any programmes aimed specifically at awarding grants to owners of charter boats. However owners of charter boats can avail of grants through a number of other Departmental programmes.

For example, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board operates a Tourism Development Scheme (TDS) which can provide financial support for the development of key tourism amenities, projects and sectors that meet objectives for tourism growth based on priorities detailed in the Strategic Framework for Action 2004–2007. In particular TDS can consider financial assistance towards additional mooring facilities for boats. Any assistance offered is subject to the proposed project demonstrating its viability, additionality and sustainability as well as completing a satisfactory economic appraisal to assess the need for the project, its strategic context and fit, its benefits to tourism and economic impact.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) also has a range of projects which have been or are currently being funded through DARD's Rural Development Programme (2001 to 2006). This aims to tackle disadvantage and is designed to produce flexible opportunities for all rural dwellers. Worth approximately £80 million, it brings together elements of several EU programmes and initiatives covering:

Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (PBSP)

PEACE II Programme (the Natural Rural Resource Tourism Initiative—NRRTI)

LEADER +

INTERREG IIIA (Northern Ireland/Ireland)

In addition support is specifically targeted on farmers and members of farming families within the PEACE II programme. Within this programme, the NRRTI programme has provided support for the enhancement of harbour facilities and the provision of water-based activities on Lough Erne. In addition, within PBSB, the Lough Neagh Strategic Fund (LNSF) supports economic, environmental and social projects which will assist with the development and management of the

Lough Neagh Wetlands area. A limited fund was set aside specifically for strategic projects on the Lough. Projects wishing to develop water based recreation businesses may apply to the LNSF for support. The INTERREG programme also provides support for the development and enhancement of tourism and associated activities that form part of a cross border development strategy.

As the Rural Development Programme has reached an advanced stage in terms of commitments, any potential applicants would need to ensure that the Programme's measures which are most relevant to their needs are still open for applications.

Civil Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to open internal Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Civil Service job trawls to Home Civil Service staff employed in Northern Ireland. [203152]

Mr. Pearson: Internal Northern Ireland Office (NIO) trawls and service-wide trawls for posts in the NIO are currently open to Home Civil Service (HCS) staff within the NIO. This does not extend to other HCS staff in Northern Ireland. Interchange arrangements facilitate staff movement between the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and HCS. These are usually for short-term placements. There are no plans to open NICS trawl competitions to HCS staff.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the practice of not including Home civil service staff employed in Northern Ireland in internal Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland civil service job trawls has been equality-proofed. [203154]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) complies with the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) arrangements in terms of equality proofing. Internal NIO trawls and Service-wide trawls for posts in the NIO are currently open to Home Civil Service (HCS) staff but only those within the NIO. The specific policy of not including all HCS staff in Northern Ireland in trawl competitions run by Northern Ireland Departments has not been equality proofed. However, in accordance with the requirements of its Equality Scheme, the Department of Finance and Personnel has carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the recruitment and promotion policies employed by the NICS. The public consultation period for the EQIA began on the 24 November 2004 and will end on 1 March 2005.

Consumerline

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many inquiries Consumerline has dealt with since its inception; and what the average cost has been per enquiry. [203121]

Mr. Gardiner: From its commencement on 3 November 2003 until 31 October 2004 Consumerline has handled 22,536 enquiries at an average cost of £10.90 per inquiry.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital costs of Consumerline were to 31 October. [203122]

Mr. Gardiner: Consumerline costs for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 October 2004 were as follows:

	£
(a) Revenue	383,600
(b) Capital	471,900

Disabled Access

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on recent actions to improve access for those with disabilities at GP surgeries and health trust facilities in the Province. [202592]

Angela Smith: Health and Social Services boards and trusts have been taking a range of actions to meet their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). These include access audits of premises, identifying essential remedial work and factoring this into planned maintenance schedules. Where GPs own the premises in which they run surgeries it will be for them to ensure that, as service providers, they meet their obligations under the DDA.

The Department has provided an additional £3.5 million in 2003–04 and a further £5 million in 2004–05 to address DDA remedial work. It has also recently appointed Disability Action to carry out a review of action taken to date by Health and Social Services boards, trusts and agencies to comply with the access provisions of the DDA. A report of the review is expected in May 2005.

EU Environmental Directives

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the infraction proceedings pending against the Government arising from Northern Ireland's failure to comply with EU environmental directives. [202570]

Angela Smith: The following list sets out the EU directives that are subject to Article 226 Reasoned Opinion proceedings or beyond. Some of the cases arise from challenges to the transposing legislation while others relate to specific implementation.

Directive number	*Directive title*
1975/439/EC	Waste Oils
1975/442/EC	Waste Framework
1976/160/EC	Bathing Water
1978/659/EC	Quality of Fresh Water to Support Fish
1979/923/EC	Shellfish Waters
1991/271/EC	Urban Waste Water Treatment (two cases)
1991/676/EC	Nitrates from Agricultural Sources
1991/689/EC	Hazardous Waste
1997/11/EC	Environmental Impact Assessment
1998/83/EC	Drinking Water Quality
2000/53/EC	End of Life Vehicles

Executive Children's Fund

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether funding for the Executive Children's Fund is located within the Draft Priorities and Budget 2005–08; and what funding is available in the Draft Priorities and Budget for the implementation of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Children and Young People's Strategy. [202874]

Mr. Pearson: The Draft Priorities and Budget 2005–08 includes proposed allocations for the Children's Fund of £9.5 million and £5.4 million in 2005–06 and 2006–07 respectively. The Draft Children and Young People's Strategy was launched for consultation on 23 November with views sought from all interested parties by 28 February 2005. It is only when that consultation process has been completed, that Ministers will be in a position to make informed decisions about any future funding implications.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding will be available for children's services in the Draft Priorities and Budget 2005–08; what the provision was in the last round of funding; and what assessment he has made of the impact the Draft Priorities and Budget 2005–08 will have on existing services and new developments for children, young people and families in need in Northern Ireland. [202875]

Mr. Pearson: Children's services cover a wide and varied range of activities undertaken across a number of Departments and in the circumstances it is not possible to clearly separate all funding on services for children in the budget processes.

The proposed spending plans detailed in the Draft Priorities and Budget 2005–08 would allow Departments to maintain and develop a wide range of public services which would impact on the community as a whole including children, young people and families in need in Northern Ireland. The draft Public Service Agreements (PSAs), contained in the document, set out the main departmental objectives, proposed budgets for years 2005–08, planned citizen outcomes, key service channels and targets that Departments are working to deliver. The PSAs will continue to be developed further and final versions will be set out in the Revised Priorities and Budget 2005–08 document which is due for publication later this month.

Exports

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the level of exports, beyond the UK, from Northern Ireland was, expressed as a percentage of the regional gross domestic product in the last year for which figures are available. [202867]

Mr. Gardiner: Regional Estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have been superseded by Gross Value Added (GVA) following the extension of the European System of Accounts 1995 (ESA95) to the Regional Accounts and which produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The most recent regional GVA information available is for the year 2002.

HM Customs and Excise are responsible for the collation of exports figures for the UK and the regions and while the estimate most comparable to the GVA figure would be exports expressed on a balance of payments basis, this is not available at a regional level. Therefore the value used represents exports for Northern Ireland during 2002, based on the total value of goods at the UK border.

As the GVA and exports estimates are on a different basis, a percentage has not been calculated, the relevant information is shown separately as follows.

	£ million
Value of Exports from Northern Ireland in 2002	343
Northern Ireland GVA in 2002	20,497

Source:
National Accounts Co-ordination Division, ONS and HM Customs and Excise, Statistics and Analysis of Trade Unit.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the fuel poverty strategy for Northern Ireland will be issued; and what the proposed time scale is for the implementation of its recommendations. [203153]

Mr. Spellar: The Government's fuel poverty strategy "Ending Fuel Poverty: A Strategy for Northern Ireland" was launched on 23 November. The strategy sets out a target of eradicating fuel poverty in Northern Ireland in all vulnerable households and the social rented sector by 2010 and in non-vulnerable households by 2016.

General Practitioners

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce an audiology direct access system through which general practitioners in the Province could refer patients directly to audiologists. [202588]

Angela Smith: The current referral path for most audiology patients in Northern Ireland is from their General Practitioner to an ENT Consultant and on to an audiologist, if required. However it is for Boards and Trusts to provide local services in the way that best meets the needs of their patients and some have opted for a direct access system, such as Newry and Mourne Trust. A number of others are piloting direct access with a limited number of general practitioners in order to assess demand and resource implications before extending the scheme.

Hospital Audiology Departments

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes have been made to audiology department facilities at hospitals across the Province in the last 12 months. [202590]

Angela Smith: In the past 12 months all trusts with audiology departments have moved to digital systems and computerisation, for the fitting of digital hearing

aids, in line with a Province-wide modernisation programme. In addition, they are in the process of installing a computer-based management information system (Practice Navigator), which will enable audiology departments across Northern Ireland to share information. Individual trusts have made a range of other improvements in respect of staffing, equipment and accommodation.

Irish Medium Schools

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Irish medium schools there are in Northern Ireland; what their average cost is in 2004–05; and what percentage their pupils make up of the total school population, broken down by Northern Ireland Education Board area. [203048]

Mr. Gardiner: There are 18 Irish medium schools in Northern Ireland entitled to receive funding under the Local Management of Schools arrangements. Two of these have only recently received approval and the relevant funding authorities are currently assessing the level of resources to which these schools are entitled. The following table sets out the average initial delegated budget allocations for 2004–05 and the percentage number of pupils in each Education and Library Board area for the 16 Irish medium schools funded for the complete financial year.

Board area	*Number of schools*	*Average initial delegated budget (Irish medium schools) (£)*	*Per capita (Irish medium schools) (£)*	*Percentage of overall pupils*
BELB	8	425,909	2,478	2.4
NEELB	1	95,614	2,732	0.1
SEELB	2	247,738	2,636	0.3
SELB	2	184,516	2,292	0.2
WELB	3	186,577	2,245	0.7
Overall	16	226,695	2,440	0.7

The variation between Boards is caused by the small number of schools involved, their relative sizes in terms of pupil numbers, differing levels of social deprivation and variations in the individual LMS schemes operated by each of the Education and Library Boards.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average *(a)* pupil/teacher ratio and *(b)* cost per pupil attending (i) Irish medium schools, (ii) maintained schools, (iii) controlled schools and (iv) integrated schools was in each Northern Ireland Education Board area at the latest date for which figures are available. [203049]

Mr. Gardiner: The following table sets out the information requested. The cost per pupil is based on data contained in the Local Management of Schools outturn statements published by the funding authorities for the financial year 2003–04.

Board	*Sector*	*Average pupil/teacher ratio (£)*	*Average cost per pupil (£)*
BELB	Irish medium	15.0	2,971
	Maintained	16.0	3,252
	Controlled	16.6	3,661
	Integrated	16.4	3,508
NEELB	Irish medium	11.7	3,883
	Maintained	17.5	3,131
	Controlled	18.0	2,949
	Integrated	15.7	3,537
SEELB	Irish medium	17.8	2,963
	Maintained	17.0	3,238
	Controlled	17.9	3,108
	Integrated	15.6	3,769
SELB	Irish medium	15.7	3,033
	Maintained	18.0	2,928
	Controlled	17.2	3,099
	Integrated	16.8	3,368
WELB	Irish medium	18.1	2,654
	Maintained	17.6	3,004
	Controlled	17.3	3,217
	Integrated	16.0	3,518

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of Northern Ireland's population are Irish speakers, broken down by Northern Ireland Education Board area. [203050]

Mr. Pearson: The 2001 Census of Population showed that 10.35 per cent. of persons aged three and over had some knowledge of Irish. The equivalent figures at Education and Library Board level are provided in the following table.

Education and Library Board	*Percentage of persons aged three and over who have some knowledge of Irish*
Belfast	13.57
North Eastern	6.83
South Eastern	5.62
Southern	14.70
Western	13.38

Passive Smoking

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the Code of Practice on Passive Smoking at Work to be published. [201939]

Mr. Gardiner: The Government recently published a White Paper, "Choosing health: making healthier choices easier" that contains a number of proposals for dealing with passive smoking in the workplace in England. Publication of a Code of Practice on Passive Smoking at Work in Northern Ireland is currently on hold while a fresh look is taken at the way forward in the light of the White Paper proposals and also developments elsewhere, including Scotland and Wales.

Primary Schools (Psychology Support)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the budget for psychology support to primary schools in North Belfast is in 2004–05; how many psychology referrals there have been to each primary school in each of the last five years; and what

the constituent parts of the common funding formula used by the Belfast Education and Library Board to allocate these psychology referrals to individual schools are. [203051]

Mr. Gardiner: The BELB is currently reviewing all budgets and until this review is complete a precise figure for the educational psychology service budget for 2004–05 is not available. However, the cost of providing an educational psychology service to all children in BELB in 2003–04 is estimated to have been £1,191,122. It is not possible to give an exact figure for the proportion of these costs which were incurred in primary schools in North Belfast only, but we know that 17 per cent. of all assessments completed by the psychology service took place in North Belfast primary schools.

Calculating the number of referrals to the educational psychology service from each primary school in the area over the past five years is not possible in the time available. I have, however, provided as follows the global figures for referrals from North Belfast primary schools in the BELB area.

	Global figure
1999–2000	396
2000–01	462
2001–02	473
2002–03	467
2003–04	501

There is no specific factor either within the existing Belfast Education and Library Board's Local Management of School's funding formula or within the proposed common funding formula to allocate psychology referrals to individual schools. The costs of the school psychology service are met centrally by the Belfast Education and Library Board and, therefore, are not charged to the delegated budgets of individual schools.

The North-Eastern Education and Library Board, into which five wards in the North Belfast area fall, was not able to respond in the time scale available. I will write to you again as soon as this information is available together with the number of referrals from each primary school in the Belfast Board area.

Sexual Health Clinics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to introduce combined sexual health clinics in the Province that incorporate genito-urinary medicine and family planning services in a joint facility. [202614]

Angela Smith: This issue will be addressed as part of the implementation of the new Sexual Health Promotion Strategy which will be launched in the spring next year.

Wheel-clamping

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to review the law relating to private operations of wheel-clamping in Northern Ireland. [200910]

Angela Smith: Wheel-clamping for Vehicle Excise Duty evasion is undertaken by a private contractor under the direct authorisation of Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland, operating as part of a UK-wide contract. This is the only wheel-clamping carried out on public roads in NI.

There are no plans to review the law.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 13 December 2004

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 his special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202252]

Mr. Hain: All travel by Special Advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code. The information requested is as follows:

(a)

Date of travel	*Destination*	*Cost (£)*
17 November 2003	Birmingham	80.00
26 January 2004	Birmingham	111.00
23 February 2004	Reading	78.00
8 March 2004	Cardiff	156.00
Total	—	425.00

The visit on 17 November to Birmingham was made in connection with my speech there on the 'Future of Europe'. The three other domestic visits were made in connection with the outreach work of the Modernisation Committee inquiry into engaging with the public.

(b) No overseas visits were undertaken by my Special Advisers in 2003–04.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House whether special advisers for whom he is responsible have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203456]

Mr. Hain: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers for whom he is responsible between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203474]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House whether departmental special advisers for whom he is responsible have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203497]

Mr. Hain: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Solicitor-General how many departmental mobile telephones were used by the Law Officers, special advisers and officials in her Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202155]

The Solicitor-General: Details of the use of mobile telephones in the Law Officers' Departments are given in the table. 1998 is the earliest year for which information is available for the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers, Crown Prosecution Service and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and on cost for Treasury Solicitor's Department. The information on costs covers the cost of equipment and call and access (line rental) charges. CPS does not hold details centrally on the numbers or costs of 'pay-as-you-talk' telephones and 'top-up' cards which are purchased at CPS Area level.

Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers

	Number	*Cost p.a. (£)*	*Number lost/stolen*	*Replacement cost (£)*
1998–99	2,853	0	0	0
1999–2000	9	2,475	0	0
2000–01	7	2,517	0	0
2001–02	9	3,294	0	0
2002–03	10	4,419	0	0
2003–04	16	8,231	1	0
2004–05[1]	17	5,451	0	0

[1] figures for year to date

Crown Prosecution Service and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

	Number	*Cost p.a. (£)*	*Number lost/stolen*	*Replacement cost/value (£)*
1998–99	131	[1]698	0	0
1999–2000	223	[1]92,182	0	0
2000–01	280	62,238	0	0
2001–02	346	77,356	1	170
2002–03	428	182,050	4	600
2003–04	494	200,784	6	900
2004–05	[2]519	[3]90,818	17	1,700

[1] some 1998–99 rental and call charges fell for payment in 1999–2000 but not possible to identify separately
[2] active number as at November 2004
[3] cost to August 2004

Serious Fraud Office

	Number	*Cost p.a. (£)*	*Number lost/stolen*	*Replacement cost (£)*
1997	15	11,870	0	0
1998	17	4,479	1	65
1999	17	6,650	0	0
2000	24	7,242	2	130
2001	27	8,024	3	195

Serious Fraud Office

	Number	Cost p.a. (£)	Number lost/stolen	Replacement cost (£)
2002	26	8,359	4	60
2003	26	6,146	2	40
2004[1]	28	5,092	0	0

[1] figures for year to date

Treasury Solicitor's Department

	Number	Cost p.a. (£)	Number lost/stolen	Replacement cost (£)
1997	11	not available	0	0
1998	12	7,182	1	95
1999	17	8,981	0	0
2000	20	10,122	0	0
2001	20	7,869	6	1,044
2002	26	12,735	3	792
2003	22	13,822	3	750
2004[1]	30	14,100	1	100

[1] figures for year to date

TRANSPORT

Car Emissions

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much funding has been provided to local authorities to enable them to conduct random roadside emissions tests as introduced in regulations in July 2002; [201209]

(2) how many cars have failed random roadside emissions tests in each year since 1997; how many fixed penalties have been issued to drivers whose cars have failed random roadside emissions tests; and how many other enforcement actions have been taken against drivers whose cars have failed random roadside emissions tests; [201210]

(3) how many vehicles other than cars have failed random roadside emissions tests in each year since 1997; how many fixed penalties have been issued to the owners of these vehicles in the same period; and how many other enforcement actions have been taken against the owners of these vehicles in the same period. [201211]

Mr. Jamieson: £1,966,800 has been allocated to local authorities to carry out roadside emissions checks under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.

A pilot scheme allowing seven local authorities to carry out vehicle emissions tests took place between February 1998 and January 1999. Checks were also carried out by local authorities in the financial year 2003–04. The following table shows the number of cars that failed the check and the enforcement action taken.

	1998–99	2003–04
Number of failures	2,336	2,100
Failure rate (percentage)	11	7
Fixed penalty	985	[1]
Advised	1,351	[1]

[1] Unknown

Relatively few fixed penalties have been issued as the primary purpose of the local authority emissions checking scheme is not to generate revenue but to encourage motorists to regularly service and maintain their cars.

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) also carry out emissions checks on all vehicles including cars.

VOSA do not issue fixed penalties. Instead, vehicles which fail a roadside emissions check are issued with a prohibition. This prohibits the vehicle from being moved from a date specified in the prohibition notice if the emissions levels are not rectified.

The following table shows the numbers of prohibitions (Prb) issued for each category of vehicle failing a VOSA roadside emissions check since 1997and the failure rate as a percentage of all vehicles checked.

	Cars		Taxis		LGV	
	Prb	(Percentage)	Prb	(Percentage)	Prb	(Percentage)
2003–04	2,555	(4.4)	167	(7.6)	363	(4.4)
2002–03	2,670	(4.6)	138	(5.8)	411	(4.1)
2001–02	2,740	(4.5)	98	(5.1)	382	(3.5)
2000–01	2,536	(4.4)	76	(3.3)	254	(3.0)
1999–2000	1,762	(2.2)	197	(5.3)	220	(1.8)
1998–99	2,419	(3.8)	196	(6.4)	339	(3.6)
1997–98	3,146	(4.1)	347	(8.6)	598	(4–8)

	HGV		PSV	
	Prb	(Percentage)	Prb	(Percentage)
2003–04	36	(0.5)	16	(0.3)
2002–03	59	(0.8)	27	(0.5)
2001–02	78	(0.8)	40	(0.6)
2000–01	101	(1.0)	36	(0.5)
1999–2000	123	(0.8)	45	(0.5)
1998–99	203	(1.7)	99	(1.2)
1997–98	324	(2.5)	198	(1.8)

Departmental Telephones

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated cost to his Department is of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic numbers and *(b)* international numbers. [201081]

Charlotte Atkins: Automatic logs are kept of all calls and regular reviews carried out. From those reviews there is little evidence of unauthorised use by members of staff. When any have been identified the cost has been recovered, which has been relatively low (£10 or less) records of which are not kept centrally.

Local Transport Plans (South West Region)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list each proposal in the south west region awaiting a decision for final approval as part of the local transport plan, broken down by local transport authority. [200201]

Charlotte Atkins: The only major local transport scheme that was awaiting a decision for full approval in the south west region was Somerset county council's

North West Taunton Package. The council were informed on 2 December that this approval had been granted.

Road Improvements

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which road schemes have been added to the Targeted Programme of Improvements since 1 June. [202162]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* There have been no road schemes added to the Targeted Programme of Improvements since 1 June 2004.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which road schemes are to be considered for inclusion in the Targeted Programme of Improvements between 1 December 2004 and 1 May 2005. [202113]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency has been asked to prepare submissions for consideration by the Secretary of State for Transport for possible inclusion in the Targeted Programme of Improvements of the following schemes:

M1 Junction 30 to Junction 42 widening

M11 Junction 8 to 9 widening

M25 junction 28/A12 Brook Street interchange

M27 Junction 3 to Junction 4 widening

M27 Junction 11 to Junction 12 climbing lanes

M60 Junction 24, Denton Roundabout

M62 Junction 25 to Junction 28 widening.

Stourport-on-Severn Relief Road

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether Government funding will be made available for the Stourport-on-Severn relief road. [203764]

Charlotte Atkins: We have yet to receive a bid for funding for this scheme from Worcestershire county council.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Welfare

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress with consultation on the draft Animal Welfare Bill. [199492]

Mr. Bradshaw: The initial stage of the Animal Welfare Bill review involved a public consultation which ran between January and April 2002 to which Defra received some 2,500 replies. A copy of the analysis of the consultation can be found on the Defra website, www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare. Between October 2002 and January 2003 Defra officials organised some 19 stakeholder meetings at which approximately a hundred interest groups were represented.

Since the stakeholder meetings, officials have organised working groups made up of a range of interested parties which have helped to inform our work on proposed secondary legislation under the Animal Welfare Bill. The work of these groups on secondary legislation will continue should the Bill be enacted and draft secondary legislation will be subject to public consultation in the normal way.

In addition to public consultation carried out by my Department, between July and October 2004 the House of Commons' Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee conducted pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Bill and this included inviting interested parties to provide written and oral evidence on the draft legislation. EFRA hope to publish their report on the draft Bill shortly.

All told, about four hundred organisations have been consulted on the draft Bill. A Bill will be introduced when Parliamentary time is available.

Biodiversity

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact that termination of the EU Life Nature fund would have on member states with smaller national budgets but high levels of biodiversity. [200580]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not yet clear to what degree the opportunities provided by the outgoing EU LIFE Nature fund will feature in the EU's 2007/2013 financial perspective. Along with other member states the UK has asked for clarification of the scope of the proposed LIFE+ Regulation and other EU co-funding instruments.

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will support continuation of a dedicated EU biodiversity fund for measures ineligible for support under other EU instruments. [200581]

Mr. Bradshaw: At Environment Council on 14 October 2004, the UK recognised the value provided by the outgoing LIFE Nature Regulation for innovation and best practice activities. The Secretary of State called for the new LIFE+ proposals, together with other relevant instruments, to continue to provide similar funding opportunities.

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much of EU Life Nature funding was received in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each year since 1993. [200582]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since 1993 the UK has been successful in securing €44,553,322 (£31,221,669) match funding under the EU LIFE Nature programme. Of this amount the following sums were allocated as set out in the table to projects wholly or predominantly based in each country.

€

	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
1993	—	—	—	—
1994	300,000	2,367,500	—	—
1995	1,104,400	—	393,000	—
1996	4,335,078	—	—	—
1997	3,965,722	1,703,258	—	—
1998	233,228	502,588	—	—
1999	3,358,388	—	—	—

€

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
2000	4,639,824	5,569,115	—	—
2001	—	—	—	—
2002	7,596,203	3,677,720	—	—
2003	921,751	—	—	—
2004	1,537,639	2,347,908	—	—
Total	27,992,233	16,168,089	393,000	0

It has not been possible to confirm precisely the amounts received by the successful projects: (1) because some projects are still ongoing; and (2) minor variations to allocations are sometimes negotiated between the European Commission and the applicant at the end of a project to reflect work actually completed.

Biomass Task Force

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Biomass Task Force will report to her Department; and when her Department will report the results of the Biomass Task Force to the House. [203097]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the terms of reference of the Biomass Task Force the final report to Government are due in October 2005. Copies will be placed at that time in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Bovine TB

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what prevalence of bovine TB has been detected in culled deer in studies undertaken during the last 20 years. [202021]

Mr. Bradshaw: Accurate prevalence data for bovine TB in deer across the UK is not available. Statistics on the culling of wild deer are not collected centrally and farmed and park deer herds are not systematically tested for TB.

An official investigation by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food into the prevalence of "Mycobacterium bovis" infection in wild deer began in the south-west of England in 1984. The value of the information from this investigation is limited because (i) it is unclear how many of the fallow, red and sika deer that were examined during the survey came from truly wild populations as opposed to deer parks and farms, (ii) some infected individuals were not identified by species and (iii) the criteria for examination of material from deer carcasses changed during 1988, so that only material from animals with visible lesions was subsequently submitted for laboratory examination.

For details of the Defra funded research, carried out by the Central Science Laboratory on isolating TB in deer as well as other mammalian wildlife species (excluding badgers) I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 15 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 410W.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what research her Department has commissioned into the effectiveness of the examination of deer at abattoirs in identifying cases of bovine TB infection in venison intended for human consumption; [202022]

(2) how many incidents of bovine TB in *(a)* farmed and *(b)* park deer have been notified as a result of identification at abattoirs in each of the past five years. [202031]

Mr. Bradshaw: Carcases of farmed deer slaughtered for venison production are subject to full red meat inspection procedures by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), under the Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 (as amended). In addition, the Wild Game Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995, require that wild and park deer destined for export to other European Union member states for human consumption must undergo post-mortem inspection by the MHS.

Procedures for the post-mortem examination of deer, and the requirement to notify the State Veterinary Service of carcases suspected of being affected by TB, are set out in the MHS Operations Manual. Compliance with the requirements specified in the MHS Operations Manual is subject to annual audit. No research has been commissioned by Defra to look more closely at the effectiveness of post-mortem procedures in identifying TB in deer destined for human consumption.

Most cases of TB in park deer are notified by hunters and gamekeepers, whereas most cases of TB in farmed deer are identified following notification by the MHS. Specific data is not available for the number of notifications of suspect TB cases made at abattoirs. However, the number of park and farmed deer herds in which bovine TB was detected by post-mortem examination and confirmed by culture since 1999 is given in the following table:

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	[1]2004
Farmed deer herds	0	1	0	1	1	0
Park deer herds	1	1	0	2	0	2
Total	1	2	0	3	1	2

[1] Provisional data for January-June

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many *(a)* farmed and *(b)* park deer herds have tested positive for bovine TB in each of the last five years; and how many of those were confirmed by culture or post mortem examination. [202023]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no statutory routine testing programme for bovine TB in farmed or park deer. The numbers of farmed deer tested ante-mortem are insignificant. Surveillance of TB in deer is based largely on detection of visible TB lesions at post-mortem inspection. To confirm a report of bovine TB in a deer herd a positive laboratory culture is required in addition to visible lesions.

The number of park and farmed deer herds in which bovine TB was detected by post-mortem examination and confirmed by culture since 1999 is given in the table.

	Farmed deer herds	Park deer herds	Total
1999	0	1	1
2000	1	1	2
2001	0	0	0
2002	1	2	3
2003	1	0	1
2004[1]	0	2	2

[1] Provisional data for January–June

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what studies her Department has commissioned into the effectiveness of the examination of deer by *(a)* stalkers and *(b)* butchers in identifying cases of bovine TB in culled deer intended for human consumption. [202024]

Mr. Bradshaw: Carcases of farmed deer slaughtered for venison production are subject to full red meat inspection procedures by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), under the Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 (as amended).

Under the Wild Game Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995, wild and park deer meat intended for export to other EU Member States must also undergo post mortem inspection by the MHS. However, if destined for the UK domestic market and third countries, venison from wild or park deer falls under the umbrella of the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995. These provide for overall supervision of wild game meat production by the Environmental Health Department of the relevant Local (Food) Authority, but require no official meat inspection at all. Some plant operators producing for third country export, or the domestic market, choose to be licensed under the more demanding Wild Game Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995.

The present arrangements put the onus on the person carrying out the evisceration to detect and report any signs of TB. No studies have been commissioned into the effectiveness of these procedures in identifying cases of bovine TB. The risk of humans contracting bovine TB from meat is considered to be very low.

A new EC Regulation coming into force on 1 January 2006 will require persons who hunt wild game with a view to placing it on the market for human consumption to have sufficient knowledge of the pathology of wild game and on the production and handling of wild game and wild game meat after hunting. Training will have to be provided to the satisfaction of the Competent Authority (Food Standards Agency).

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the proportion of bovine TB infection in *(a)* farmed, *(b)* park and *(c)* wild deer entering the human food chain that remains undetected by statutory reporting procedures. [202032]

Mr. Bradshaw: Present arrangements require that suspect tuberculosis lesions in deer carcases be notified to the Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) of the State Veterinary Service. The Meat Hygiene Service is responsible for reporting suspect lesions in farmed deer, and wild and park deer destined for export to other EU member states. For wild and park deer destined for the domestic market or Third Countries, responsibility for notifying the DVM rests with the person carrying out the gralloch. No assessment has been made of the proportion of bovine TB infection remaining undetected by the current statutory reporting procedures.

The risk of humans contracting bovine TB from meat is considered to be very low. Within abattoirs the affected areas of carcases are removed as a public health protection measure. Any remaining "Mycobacterium bovis" (the causative organism of bovine TB) can be de-activated by thorough cooking.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had regarding bovine TB infection in deer with her counterparts in the devolved administrations. [202033]

Mr. Bradshaw: There have been occasional meetings involving officials from Defra, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, the Welsh Assembly Government Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Northern Ireland, at which matters associated with TB in deer have been discussed.

Bright Report

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Department's response to the recently published Bright Report on genetically modified organisms; and how this will inform policy on co-existence. [202578]

Mr. Morley: The BRIGHT project (Botanical and Rotational Implications of Genetically Modified Herbicide Tolerance) was an independent research trial run by a consortium of academic and industry partners, with part-sponsorship from Defra and the Scottish Executive.

We have referred the BRIGHT report to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment and we will consider it in the light of their advice. The results of the project do not have any particular implications in respect of co-existence between farms. But they do confirm that it may be important to control oilseed rape volunteers where a farmer wants to grow non-GM oilseed rape in a field previously sown with a GM variety.

CAP Reforms

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how she plans to monitor the impact of the guidance issued by the Tenancy Reform Industry Group on landlord/tenant aspects of the Common Agricultural Policy reforms from January 2005. [204578]

Alun Michael: The guidance note for landlords and tenants on CAP reform produced by the Tenancy Reform Industry Group, which was issued in mid November, has been well received by the industry. We hope that all parties will take into account the advice provided by the Group when reaching decisions on issues relating to CAP reform.

Defra will monitor the impact of the guidance note by maintaining its close relationship with the industry organisations represented on the Tenancy Reform Industry Group, in particular the Tenant Farmers Association, the National Farmers Union, the Country Land and Business Association, the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. We will work with these organisations to understand the experience of their membership. The information will be collated and shared with all members of the Group.

Defra has also invited tenders for research to be carried out during 2005 and 2006 on the potential impacts of CAP reform on the diversification activities of tenant farmers in England. While the research is intended primarily to focus on the effects of CAP reform in opening up opportunities for farm diversification by tenant farmers, the specification for the project also covers investigation of the wider impact of CAP reform on the landlord/tenant relationship.

Conservation Areas

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the consultation on the designation of *(a)* Bolton Fell Moss and *(b)* Solway Moss as special areas of conservation to be concluded. [200163]

Mr. Bradshaw: The public consultation raised scientific objections about the candidature of Solway Moss and Bolton Fell Moss, in particular the composition of the topography. Given the complex nature of the objections raised, it is not possible to give a definite date for their resolution and subsequent conclusion of the consultation.

Contaminated Sites

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has received from the Environment Agency in respect of the number of determinations of sites as contaminated under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. [202809]

Mr. Morley: As of the end of October, 73 formal determinations of land as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 had been notified in respect of England.

Dairy Industry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on what discussions she has had with the dairy industry on the impact of increased production costs on dairy farmers. [202661]

Alun Michael: Ministers frequently meet representatives from all parts of the dairy industry, most recently at the Dairy Supply Chain Forum on 24 November. Ministers are aware of the current concerns about increased costs for producers and processors.

Departmental Budget

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the resources that have been allocated under each departmental heading and subheading in the 2004 departmental report following the Spending Review 2004 for each year to 2007–08. [203986]

Alun Michael: At present, final internal management decisions (following the Spending Review 2004) on budgets, for 2006–07 and 2007–08, plus revisions to 2005–06, are still being made. The next Departmental Report due to be published in spring 2005, will set out information on budgets up to 2007–08 and show how they are allocated to deliver the department's functions and objectives. The Report will also reflect any organisational changes which have taken place over the last year.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total cost to her Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202349]

Alun Michael: As part of its preparations for implementing the Gershon value for money agenda in Defra, Pareto or detailed expenditure distribution analysis of departmental expenditure on professional services is now being undertaken, and will be made available publicly in due course. The analysis will define expenditure on accountancy services as a proportion of departmental expenditure on professional services.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on energy costs incurred by her Department in each of the last two years. [202352]

Alun Michael: Figures for costs alone can be misleading if not placed within the wider context of unit price changes, areas occupied and changes in actual consumption. Increases or decreases in unit charges and area occupied can mask efforts to improve energy efficiency. It is also useful to separate costs of electricity and heating fuels.

Energy costs for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04 are given in table 1 as follows, together with the corresponding consumption data and average fuel prices: figures are given separately for electricity and heating fuels, as well as for the total energy.

Table 1: Energy costs, consumption and average prices

	Electricity	*Heating fuels*	*Total energy*
Costs (£M/y)			
2002–03	2.58	1.57	4.15
2003–04	2.36	1.62	3.98
Percentage change	-9	3	-4
Consumption (M kWh/y)			
2002–03	51.67	111.33	163.00
2003–04	51.36	110.29	161.65
Percentage change	-1	-1	-1
Average price (p/kWh)			
2002–03	5.00	1.41	2.55
2003–04	4.60	1.47	2.46
Percentage change	-8	4	-3

Electricity costs have reduced by 9 per cent., following a corresponding decrease in average price, and a 1 per cent. reduction in consumption. Heating fuel costs have risen by 3 per cent. because of an increase in price (4 per cent.) offset by a 1 per cent. drop in consumption.

Table 2 as follows shows that despite a small decrease in floor area the Department's electricity consumption per square metre has increased. This is partly due to additional work being carried out in its laboratories and consumption of heating fuels per square metre has increased by 1 per cent., for similar reasons. Increasing use of IT and moves to open plan working, leading to higher staff occupation rates per square metre and therefore higher IT and air conditioning loads, are also thought to be contributory factors to increased electricity consumption per square meter.

Table 2: Floor area, consumption per square metre

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*Percentage change*
Floor area ('000 m2)	385	378	-2
Electricity/m2 (kWh/m2)	134	136	1
Heating fuel/m2 (kWh/m2)	289	292	1
Energy/m2 (kWh/m2)	424	427	1

Departmental Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the gender pay gap amongst staff in her Department. [202362]

Alun Michael: In line with Cabinet Office guidance, Defra completed an Equal Pay Review and submitted this together with an action plan to Cabinet Office in April 2003. The review covered core-Defra and two of its agencies, Pesticides Safety Directorate and Veterinary Medicines Directorate, for which the core-Department has pay remit negotiating responsibility.

The review found that there were no significant pay gaps within the Department provided that Defra's multi-year pay settlement was fully rolled out for future years up to and including 2005/06. Defra is now in the third year of the four-year settlement.

Senior managers will be considering the implications of Defra's Equal Pay Review Action Plan in conjunction with developing new pay arrangements for Defra for 2006 and beyond, following the end of the current multi-year pay settlement.

The position with regard to Defra's agencies is as follows:

Rural Payments Agency

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) submitted an Equal Pay Review and action plan to Cabinet Office in 2003 in accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines. A further Equal Pay Review has now been completed together with a revised action plan. This review and implications of the action plan on RPA pay systems is currently being considered by senior managers and the Trade Unions.

Central Science Laboratory

The Central Science Laboratory completed its Equal Pay Review in April 2003 and the resultant action plan was submitted to the Cabinet Office in May 2003. No significant pay gaps were identified as a result of gender difference but the issues continue to be subject to consultation with the Trade Unions. Subsequent pay settlements have been subject to equality-proofing.

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

In line with Cabinet Office guidance, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) completed an Equal Pay Review and submitted this together with an action plan to Cabinet Office in April 2003.

The review found that there were no significant pay gaps as a result of gender difference. There were individual problems as a legacy from earlier pay arrangements; these were addressed in the action plan. Implementation of the action plan is the subject of on-going discussions with the Trade Unions.

Veterinary Laboratories Agency

The Veterinary Laboratories Agency completed its Equal Pay Review in April 2003 and the resultant action plan was submitted to Cabinet Office in May 2003. The review found that there were no significant pay gaps as a result of gender difference. Implementation of the action plan is the subject of on-going discussion with the Trade Unions.

Emissions

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairswhat assessment she has made of the impact that rising wholesale gas prices will have on the ability of the UK to meet its carbon dioxide reduction targets; and if she will make a statement. [200557]

Mr. Morley: The updated energy projections, which feed into decisions on the UK National Allocation Plan, make assumptions about wholesale gas prices for the period to 2010. These in turn will affect projections of carbon emissions over this period.

Carbon dioxide emissions in 2003 are provisionally estimated to have been 7 per cent. below 1990 levels, and total greenhouse gas emissions 14 per cent. below 1990 levels. There was an estimated 0.25 per cent. increase in carbon dioxide emissions between 2002 and 2003. Emissions from power stations increased due to increased coal burn because of low coal prices and high gas prices, lower nuclear output, and colder outside temperatures.

Projections show that emissions will continue to fall and the UK remains on course to achieve its Kyoto target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2008–12.

The latest emissions projections, which include our assumptions about fossil fuel prices, are at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf

A review of the Climate Change Programme was launched on 15 September. The review will evaluate the success of the existing policy measures in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and will examine the scope for further reductions in the future.

External Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total cost to her Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202366]

Alun Michael: As we have made clear on a number of occasions, Defra's preparations for implementing the Gershon value for money agenda involves Pareto or detailed expenditure distribution analysis of departmental expenditure on professional services. That analysis is now being undertaken, and will be made available publicly in due course. The analysis will define expenditure on external consultants as a proportion of departmental expenditure on professional services.

Fish Quota

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the total value in *(a)* sterling and *(b)* euros of UK fish quota entitlements held by (i) fishing licence holders, (ii) fish producer organisations and (iii) others, broken down by (A) species and (B) fishing sector areas, in each of the last five years for which records are available. [202035]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department, and the other Fisheries Departments in the UK, currently issue quota allocations annually to the various groups within the fishing industry. These allocations are proportionate to the fixed quota allocation (FQA) units (quota entitlements) held by the vessels in each group. Industry groups are allowed to transfer part or all of their annual quota allocations, and there is some scope to transfer FQA units.

The Government do not charge for either annual quota or FQA units. Within the industry, swaps and other forms of trading take place: not all are financially based, and the Government are not involved in financial aspects of such trade. I have therefore made no estimate of the total value of quota entitlements.

Foot and Mouth

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason there is a difference between the amount required from the European Commission to assist in defraying the costs of implementing emergency plans to manage the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease and the actual amount agreed by the Commission. [200962]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Commission undertook a full and detailed audit of the UK's claim for re-imbursement following the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. Following the auditors' work, the Commission reported that the valuers engaged by Defra had overvalued the animals prior to slaughter. In addition the EC cited certain "technical and financial inadequacies" as the reason for reducing the UK's claim.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farms in Worcestershire have been subject to decontamination activity by her Department this year as a result of inappropriate burial of material associated with the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic; what the cost of such activity has been; and how many more farms she expects will be subject to similar activity. [201803]

Mr. Bradshaw: Two farms in Worcestershire have been subject to the removal of agricultural waste or pyre ash this year.

The Department has removed buried agricultural waste from one farm, and buried and unburied pyre ash plus a small quantity of scrap metal from another. Agricultural waste, which could not be adequately disinfected, was burned and/or buried on the affected premises during the 2001 FMD outbreak to prevent the risk of disease spread.

The total estimated costs of these operations in Worcester are £355,000.

Based on current knowledge, no other farms are expected to be the subject of similar activity in Worcestershire.

Forest of Dean

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress of the Integrated Rural Development Initiative in the Forest of Dean. [199875]

Alun Michael: The Integrated Rural Development Programme in the Forest of Dean was established in 1999 by the Countryside Agency to test and demonstrate a rural regeneration approach in an area with special landscape, economic and community issues. The Countryside Agency was required to work with the local authorities, the South West Regional Development Agency, Forest Enterprise and other key bodies, as well as with the communities in the Forest. An evaluation of the programme will be undertaken at the end of the project to assess its impact, reporting in March 2006.

Phase one of the programme from April 2000 to March 2003, aimed to focus on the initiation and development of the baseline study work and support for a number of local projects.

Phase 2, known as Building on What's Special began in April 2003 and the work undertaken includes:

- direct support for local organisations working to promote and conserve the special qualities of the area;
- recruitment of a locally based Programme Officer and integration of the Building on What's special Management Group with the Local Strategic Partnership;
- publication of a biodiversity study, which will be used in the local planning process;
- addition of over 3,000 new sites to the Sites and Monuments Record as a result of the archaeological survey;
- briefings for Forest of Dean District Council members and officers and other professional stakeholders in order to embed the Integrated Rural Development approach.

It has recently been agreed to draw up a Supplementary Planning Document about the landscape of the Forest of Dean for use in the local planning process, and to construct a website about the programme.

Horticultural Imports

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of steps being taken to prevent the introduction of disease through the importation of horticultural products; and if she will make a statement. [200111]

Mr. Bradshaw: In relation to the potential introduction of plant disease through importation of horticultural products, the Public Accounts Committee issued a report on 26 October 2004 to which the Government will shortly be providing a detailed response. Proposals for changes which generally strengthen the regime of plant health import controls have recently been the subject of public consultation, and will be implemented during 2005.

Household Waste

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of *(a)* the total amount of household waste going to landfill in each of the last three years and *(b)* the proportions within this total accounted for by (i) fit for purpose food and (ii) packaging. [202959]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* The amounts of municipal waste going to landfill in England in each of the three years for which data is available are shown in the table:

Municipal waste going to landfill

	Million tonnes
2000–01	22.0
2001–02	22.3
2002–03	22.0

There are no estimates available on the amounts of fit for purpose food and packaging within these totals.

Around 90 per cent. of municipal waste comes from households. It is estimated that just over four million tonnes of household waste produced in England is kitchen waste, or approximately 17 per cent. of total arisings.

The Government are currently consulting on a waste data strategy, designed to improve the quality of waste data in the interests of all potential users.

Hunting

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials were (i) consulted about and (ii) shown the article written by the hon. Member for the Wrekin, the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister for Rural Affairs, published in the Sunday Telegraph on 21 November, prior to its publication. [201671]

Alun Michael: Parliamentary Private Secretaries are not obliged to clear anything they write in a personal capacity with Ministers or officials. Indeed this would be wholly inappropriate when matters are the subject of a free vote. As a courtesy, my hon. Friend sent me a draft copy of his article but he did not invite approval of it, and I offered no comments on it prior to publication. No officials were consulted about or shown the article before its publication.

Insects

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairsif she will estimate the UK *(a)* fly, *(b)* mosquito and *(c)* cockroach population; and what the predicted numbers are in the event of a (i) 1 per cent., (ii) 2 per cent. and (iii) 3 per cent. increase in current average temperatures due to climate change. [200913]

Mr. Bradshaw: I am not aware that any estimate for this information is available.

Landfill Allowances Trading Scheme

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the amount to be raised in fines from local authorities under the Landfill Allowances Trading Scheme once it is in operation. [204492]

Mr. Morley: The scheme is designed as a tool to help local authorities meet the required reductions in landfill in the most cost effective way. Although a penalty system is necessary to act as a disincentive to local authorities exceeding their allowances, the Government believes that the flexibility offered in the scheme means that no authority should ever need to pay a penalty.

Oil Deliveries

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made by the Environment Agency towards developing a voluntary code of practice with the oil industry on raising standards for delivering oil to domestic heating tanks; and if she will make a statement. [203409]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* Raising delivery standards is a very important element in tackling inland oil pollution. The Environment Agency is fully supportive of the two main schemes run by industry and is looking at ways it can formalise this support and improve environmental performance. The agency is actively encouraging delivery companies to adopt the principles of the voluntary schemes on deliveries that it has helped to create with the major oil companies.

Oil Pollution

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the trend in oil pollution incidents since the publication of the Environment Agency's Position Statement on oil pollution of inland waters in February. [203411]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The Environment Agency's Position Statement showed a decline in the overall number of oil pollution incidents from 6,215 in 2000 to 5,217 in 2002, a reduction of 16 per cent. Since publication, the figures for 2003 have become available and show a further welcome decline of over 10 per cent. to 4,656. This fall is across all categories of

incident, maintaining the reduction in the most serious incidents and, importantly, also seeing a reduction in minor incidents.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to reduce the incidence of pollution caused by leakage from domestic oil tanks. [203412]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 December 2004]*. New and replacement oil tanks on domestic premises are subject to Building Regulations, which require a risk assessment to be undertaken and a bunded tank to be used if the risk is high, for example if the tank is within 10 metres of a watercourse. All tanks over 2,500 litres must be bunded.

Domestic oil storage tanks over 3,500 litres are subject to The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 which already apply to new facilities and existing facilities at significant risk and will apply to all remaining existing oil stores by 1 September 2005. In addition, the Agency has powers under the Water Resources Act 1991 to require improvements of installations where pollution of controlled waters is likely to occur.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the recommendations made by the Environment Agency in its Position Statement on oil pollution of inland waters published in February. [203413]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 December 2004]*: The Department is in regular contact with the Environment Agency about the prevention of oil pollution generally and the recommendations in the Position Statement.

Raptors

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what regulations are in place to protect raptor bird populations; and what plans she has to amend this legislation. [199544]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects all wild birds. This fulfils Great Britain's obligations under the EC wild birds directive. The Act's provisions provide a powerful framework for the conservation of wild birds, their eggs, nests and habitats. It is an offence to kill or take any wild bird and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 implemented penalties of a fine of up to £5,000 per specimen and/or six months custodial sentence.

There are no plans to amend this legislation.

Recycling Targets

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce recycling targets for local authorities to cover *(a)* the recycling of commercial waste and *(b)* home composting; and if she will make a statement. [202179]

Mr. Morley: Local authorities are only required by section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to collect commercial waste if they are requested to do so by the producer of the waste. At present, those producing commercial waste can arrange for its collection with either a local authority or a suitably licensed private waste management firm.

A statutory duty to collect commercial waste would have to be placed on local authorities if a recycling target for the collection of commercial waste were to be set for them. We have no plans to introduce such a duty and so have no plans to introduce recycling targets for local authorities to cover the recycling of commercial waste.

There is as yet no auditable methodology for determining how much waste is treated through home composting. But the Environment Agency and the Waste and Resources Action Programme are currently working to develop more robust techniques for using operational statistics to assess the diversion effects of home composting. If an auditable methodology is developed we will consider including home composting within existing composting targets.

Statutory Nuisance Complaints

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* requirement and *(b)* statutory guidance is (i) in place and (ii) planned for a borough council to have an established procedure for dealing with complaints about a statutory nuisance. [202538]

Alun Michael: Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to take reasonable steps to investigate complaints of statutory nuisance. It is for local authorities to decide how best to meet this duty. There is no provision in legislation for statutory guidance in relation to statutory nuisance.

Sustainable Development

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress by her Department since 1997 in *(a)* developing energy efficiency, *(b)* increasing biodiversity, *(c)* encouraging sustainable development and *(d)* supporting agriculture. [201090]

Alun Michael: Defra was created in June 2001 both to act as a "champion" within Government for sustainable development and with specific responsibility for environmental protection, the renewal of rural areas and the future of the farming industry. Defra reports annually on its progress in delivering these objectives through its departmental reports. We also report progress against any outstanding PSA targets in our Autumn Performance reports.

Detailed below are some of the key highlights setting out the Department's progress since its creation in the areas of: (1) sustainable development; (2) developing energy efficiency; (3) increasing biodiversity; (4) the renewal of rural areas; and (5) supporting agriculture.

(1) *Encouraging sustainable development*

Sustainable development involves integrating and balancing social, economic and environmental considerations and is described by the Government as achieving "a better quality of life for everyone, now and

for generations to come". Achieving it requires the following objectives to be met at the same time, in the UK and the world as a whole:

social progress that recognises the needs of everyone;

effective protection of the environment and prudent use of natural resources; and

maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

To reflect the Government's commitment to achieving meaningful change, Defra's target for embedding sustainable development following the 2004 Spending Review has been expanded to incorporate international sustainable development and climate change elements.

Defra has improved its organisational and administrative processes to help deliver sustainable development in three main ways:

A revised Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). RIA is an assessment of the impact of policy options in terms of the costs, benefits and risks of a proposal. The revised RIA requires all major government decisions to take full account of environmental, social and economic impacts; and

Linking of Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets to headline indicators. Following on from progress made during the 2004 Spending Review, work is continuing to formally link the headline indicators with specific Public Service Agreements across Government. This will ensure that sustainable development is given full consideration when Departments are developing their policies.

Creation of a new sustainable development programme board. The new board is chaired by Defra's Permanent Secretary and comprises senior officials representing those key Government Departments that are seen to be at the forefront of sustainable development. Its role is to ensure that Departments have the capacity to deliver their commitments arising from the new UK sustainable development strategy.

Although Defra is making progress across the three pillars (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development, Defra recognises that there is still much more to be done. Evidence from the Strategy consultation and the Sustainable Development Commission's report on progress (Shows Promise. Must Try Harder) broadly supports this assessment.

(2) *Energy Efficiency*

Energy efficiency is an integral element of the UK's strong domestic programme to address climate change. The 2003 Energy White Paper identified energy efficiency as the most cost-effective way to deliver all four of our energy policy goals. Energy Efficiency: The Government's Plan for Action was published in April 2004, setting out a clear framework for improving energy efficiency at an unprecedented level.

The policies and measures in the action plan will save over 12 million tonnes of carbon per year by 2010—more than half the UK's overall carbon saving target for 2010 and will save households and businesses £3 billion per year on their energy bills. The plan stands as an up-to-date compilation of the Government's delivery plans to make a step change in the rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

We already have a substantial package of action but we intend to do more to ensure we see a step change in the rate of improvement of energy efficiency and successfully deliver the transition to a low carbon economy.

We continue to look for ways to further strengthen energy efficiency as part of the Climate Change Programme review and will publish an updated programme in the first half of next year.

(3) *Biodiversity*

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan established clear biological targets for habitats and species. Progress since 1997 has been encouraging; for example, the 2002 reporting round revealed positive trends for more than a third of the UK BAP species and nearly 60 per cent. of the habitats. This year's figures for wild bird populations show some encouraging signs that our policies for biodiversity are resulting in positive outcomes for birds, but there is no room for complacency and more remains to be done.

In 2002 the Government published "Working with the grain of nature: a Biodiversity Strategy for England" which sets out a programme of activity to ensure the integration of biodiversity into policymaking and practice. The strategy sets out five key policy areas where integration needs to be achieved: agriculture, water, woodland, marine/coastal management and urban. It also includes four areas where cross-cutting improvement is needed: driving local and regional action; the economics and funding of biodiversity; the engagement of business and promoting education and public understanding.

We have put in place other measures including our extensive network of protected sites and the development of agri-environment schemes. We have also set challenging PSA targets to bring into favourable condition by 2010 95 per cent. of all nationally important wildlife sites; and to reverse the long-term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020. The UK BAP is about to embark on its 2005 reporting round which we hope will provide more evidence to show that our work on policy integration is resulting in further biodiversity gains.

(4) *The renewal of rural areas*

As part of the Rural Strategy 2004, we announced that we would establish an integrated agency comprising *(a)* English Nature, *(b)* the access, recreation and landscape elements of the Countryside Agency and *(c)* most of the Rural Development Service. This single independent non-departmental public body (NDPB) will build on the world-class strengths and scientific expertise of the existing organisations. It will be a champion of integrated resource management, nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape, access and recreation. Working in close partnership with the Environment Agency, it will lead on the delivery of Government targets for biodiversity to produce improvements for biodiversity across rural, urban, marine and coastal England.

We also promised to establish a new Countryside Agency. The New Countryside Agency, initially to be set up as a distinctive body within the legal framework of the Countryside Agency, will in due course be an independent NDPB in its own right. It will be a strong voice for rural people and communities, acting as expert adviser, watchdog and advocate. Its priority will be rural disadvantage. It will act as a think-tank and futures body drawing on best practice to suggest innovative solutions to Government and monitoring

and reporting on progress in delivery. It will fit within a sustainable development umbrella to ensure that in championing people, the relationship between people, their communities and their environment is enhanced and not weakened.

(5) *Supporting agriculture*

In March 2000 the Government launched the Action Plan for Farming, which was developed in partnership with industry to support industry restructuring and adaptation in response to very low income levels. In August 2001, the Government set up the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food to advise the Government on how to create a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector. The Policy Commission produced its report in December 2001, containing 105 recommendations around the theme of reconnecting farmers with the market and aligning their activities with the needs of society and with the market.

The Government incorporated the vast majority of the Policy Commission's recommendations in its Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food—Facing the Future in England, which was launched on 12 December 2002. The strategy outlines how industry, Government and consumers can work together to secure a sustainable future for our farming and food industries, as viable industries contributing to a better environment and healthy and prosperous communities. An independent Implementation Group, chaired by Sir Don Curry, has been established to oversee delivery of the strategy.

The strategy sets out the basis for a new relationship between Government and the farming industry in England. At its heart is a drive to make farmers more market, and less subsidy, focused while managing their businesses in more environmentally and socially responsible ways. The Government pay £1.8 billion in direct support to agriculture each year through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Last June's CAP reform deal, which has allowed member states to decouple CAP subsidies from production, is crucial to delivering the strategy.

The England Rural Development Programme provides a framework for the operation of 10 separate but integrated schemes which provide new opportunities to protect and improve the countryside, to develop sustainable enterprises and to help rural communities to thrive. The Government have spent £825.3 million under these schemes since the programme was launched in 2000.

Further information

More detailed information on the Department's performance can be found in Defra's Departmental and Autumn Performance Reports. Copies are available in the House of Commons Library and can be found online at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/deprep/default.htm.

Vehicle Dealers

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what legislation is in place to prevent vehicle dealers from trading on public highways. [203291]

Alun Michael: Legislative powers are already available to local authorities to deal with vehicles that have been abandoned on the street. The Government recognises the link between abandoned vehicles and other irresponsible criminal activity and environmental damage as well as inconsiderate vehicle ownership.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill includes a raft of measures that will improve the suite of powers available to local authorities to tackle damage to the local environment. Among other measures, this Bill will make it an offence to repair a vehicle on a road and to expose or advertise for sale vehicles on a road as part of a business

Veterinary Services

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (1) how many large animal veterinary practices have operated in the UK in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; [200685]

(2) how many large animal veterinary practices have *(a)* closed and *(b)* merged in the last 10 years for which figures are available; [200686]

(3) what proportion of newly qualified veterinary surgeons have entered large animal practices in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [200732]

Mr. Bradshaw: *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons is the regulatory body responsible for the veterinary profession and maintain a register of veterinary surgeons eligible to practise in the United Kingdom. There is no requirement for all practices to be notified to the college. Information on the number of veterinary surgeons, and the number of veterinary practices is not held by the Department. However, a wide range of evidence was presented to the EFRA Committee to inform its report on Vets and Veterinary Services (Sixteenth Report of Session 2002/2003).

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the capacity of *(a)* public and *(b)* private veterinary services to meet the needs of large and farm animals in the UK. [200688]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee report on Vets and Veterinary Services (sixteenth report of session 2002/2003) considered the provision of farm veterinary services in England and Wales. The Government's response recognised that the veterinary profession is undergoing fundamental changes and the biggest changes are yet to come. There is much that the profession can do to meet these challenges, such as farm health planning and developing new working relationships with customers and other farm service providers

There is no evidence of market failure in the provision of private veterinary services. More veterinarians than ever are being trained and there is clear evidence that they want to be involved in large animal work.

Although no formal assessment has been made of the capacity of public veterinary services, the staffing levels of the state veterinary service remain at an average of 225 full time equivalent veterinary officers. On

29 November I announced the decision to go ahead with the plan to launch the new agency on 1 April 2005. We are pledged to working with all customers and stakeholders, listening to their concerns and their counsel and taking their views into account as the agency takes shape.

Waste Food

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking towards reducing the amount of *(a)* waste food and *(b)* fit for purpose food going to landfill; and what assessment she has made of the possible use of fit for purpose waste food to feed vulnerable people in the community. [202957]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* From 1 January 2006 the Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 will prohibit the use of landfill for the disposal of former foodstuffs containing material of animal origin which originate in food manufacturing and retail premises. Also, I understand that a number of multiple retailers have voluntary initiatives in place to make use of unsold food products.

The Government supports diverting foodstuffs away from landfill and provides funding for various measures that offer value-for-money in terms of diverting waste from landfill. Government also supports schemes that help the more vulnerable members of society, in a way that is consistent with Local Authorities Homelessness Strategies.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what initiatives she has identified to divert fit for purpose waste food from going to landfill; and if she will make a statement. [202958]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* The Government are committed to reducing the UK's reliance on landfill, in order to reduce its environmental impact and because landfilling is a missed opportunity to recover value from waste. As a contribution to this objective, the Government supports diverting foodstuffs away from landfill and provides funding for various measures that offer value-for-money in terms of diverting waste from landfill. In addition, I understand that a number of multiple retailers have voluntary schemes in place to make use of unsold food products.

From 1 January 2006 the Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 will prohibit the use of landfill for the disposal of former foodstuffs containing material of animal origin which originate in food manufacturing and retail premises.

Wood (Waste and Recycling)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what steps her Department is taking to increase the reuse of waste wood; [200470]

(2) what guidance her Department gives to local authorities on encouraging recycling of wood; [200471]

(3) what estimate she has made of the amount of waste wood produced by households in the UK in the last year. [200472]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* Wood may be diverted from landfill in a number of ways such as through re-use or recycling it as a raw material in construction, or for manufacturing wood-based products, or for use as a fuel, rather than being sent to landfill. To encourage this, wood is one of the priority materials under the Government-funded Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) which was established to create materials for recycled materials. By 2006 WRAP is aiming to deliver an additional 150,000 tonnes recycling capacity for waste wood, with the majority going into added-value end markets.

Defra provides a range of support for local authorities in England to help improve their recycling rates for all types of household waste, including waste wood, such as the Waste Implementation Programme's Local Authority Support programme. Local authorities can also get advice on the separate collection of dry recyclables and organic wastes from WRAP'S ROTATE programme.

My Department does not collect separate data on the amount of waste wood produced by households in the UK. However, Dr. J. Parfitt's Analysis of Household Waste Composition cited in the Strategy Unit's 2002 report, "Waste not, Want not; A strategy for tackling the waste problem in England", indicates that wood made up 5 per cent. of household waste in the UK in 2000–01.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [200864]

Hilary Benn: I refer to the response given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, Douglas Alexander on Thursday 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 397–98W. A letter was deposited in the Library in relation to this response which gave the cost of ministerial cars for 2002–03.

My hon. Friend the Minister of the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) has asked Nick Matheson, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the cost of ministerial vehicles provided to this Department in 2003–04.

The costs of taxis provided for DFID, under the central contracts in the UK, for the last two years are as follows:

£

	Cost of taxis
2002–03	105,908
2003–04	143,447

Taxi costs incurred by members of staff outside the central contracts are not available centrally and could not be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years, giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [200865]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Sponsorship or co-sponsorship of events is an important element in DFID's administration of the UK Government's overseas development programme. They help to publicise work that is being done, ensure a healthy level of informed debate on development and related issues and make valuable inputs to development of future policy, strategies and delivery mechanisms. DFID organises a number of varied kinds of event during an average year both in the UK and in other countries in the developed and developing worlds. However, DFID has no central source which could provide the information required by this question and the cost of obtaining it would be disproportionate to the end result.

Food Aid

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which countries have been the top 20 recipients of *(a)* UK and *(b)* EU food aid in the last year; what tonnages of food each country received, broken down by food type; and what proportion of each food type was locally produced in each country. [203013]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In 2003–04, the UK provided £285.110 million as humanitarian assistance; this included £42.452 million as cash contributions to appeals for emergency food aid. The UK's international food aid is channelled through the World Food Programme (WHO) and NGOs.

Where emergency responses involve the supply of food commodities, the top recipient countries of UK financed food aid are shown in the following table. The table lists the main food types supplied and also indicates the amount provided, the percentage purchased in the recipient country (locally), in neighbouring countries (regional) or direct from the donor country (direct supply).

UK Food Aid: 2003–04

Recipient county	*Metric tonnes*	*Percentage L*[1]	*Percentage R*[2]	*Percentage D*[3]	*Food type*
Ethiopia	113,395	9	91	—	beans, corn soya blend, maize, vegetable oil, wheat
Zimbabwe	42,733	16	84	—	beans, corn soya blend, maize, maize meal, peas, pulses, vegetable oil
Iraq	44,970	—	88	—	rice, sugar, beans, dried whole milk, lentils, peas, vegetable oil, wheat flour, maize, peas
Angola	5,753	2	98	—	maize, split peas
Uganda	57,477	100	—	—	beans, corn soya blend, maize
Eritrea	5,584	—	100	—	wheat, split peas
Afghanistan	5,370	—	97	2	peas, sugar, wheat
Sudan	4,468	11	89	—	corn soya blend, sorghum, vegetable oil, split peas,
Zambia	4,250	100	—	—	beans, corn soya blend
Mauritania	4,199	100	—	—	sugar, vegetable oil, wheat soya blend, split peas, wheat
Nepal	2,553	100	—	—	rice
Russian Federation	2,541	89	11	—	salt, vegetable oil, wheat flour
Malawi	2,526	16	84	—	maize, peas
Albania	2,258	—	100	—	wheat flour
Kenya	1,429	100	—	—	maize
Iran	990	—	11	89	rice, sugar
Mali	900	—	—	—	maize
Swaziland	587	—	—	—	beans
Bangladesh	175	50	50	—	salt, sugar, split peas, vegetable oil, wheat soya blend
Rwanda	145	—	—	100	beans, corn soya blend

[1] Local supply
[2] Regional supply
[3] Direct transfer

The European Community's (EC) budget for food security and food aid in 2003 was €425.637 million (£297.641 million) and in 2004 is €419.637 (£293.452 million).

The UK's share of the EC food security and food aid budget is 19 per cent.

Where food commodities were supplied by the EC in 2003–04 as food aid, the top recipient countries are shown in the following table. The table also indicates the amount provided, the percentage purchased in the recipient country (locally), in neighbouring countries (regional) or direct from the donor country (direct supply). The table also lists the main food types supplied.

European Union Food Aid: 2003–04

Recipient country	*Metric tonnes*	*Percentage L*[1]	*Percentage R*[2]	*Percentage D*[3]	*Food type*
Ethiopia	341,030	—	93	—	wheat, corn soya blend, cereals and grains, sorghum, faffa, maize
Zimbabwe	104,969	24	76	—	maize, corn soya blend, pulses, vegetable oil, soya oil
Sudan	4,468	11	89	—	corn soya blend, sorghum, vegetable oil, split peas,
Zambia	4,250	100	—	—	beans, corn soya blend
Mauritania	4,199	100	—	—	sugar, vegetable oil, wheat soya blend, split peas, wheat
Nepal	2,553	100	—	—	rice
Russian Federation	2,541	89	11	—	salt, vegetable oil, wheat flour
Malawi	2,526	16	84	—	maize, peas
Albania	2,258	—	100	—	wheat flour
Kenya	1,429	100	—	—	maize
Iran	990	—	11	89	rice, sugar
Mali	900	—	—	—	maize
Swaziland	587	—	—	—	beans
Bangladesh	175	50	50	—	salt, sugar, split peas, vegetable oil, wheat soya blend
Rwanda	145	—	—	100	beans, corn soya blend

[1] Local supply
[2] Regional supply
[3] Direct transfer

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what has been the cost in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [200872]

Hilary Benn: On the whole, the Human Rights Act has not given rise to a great deal of specific litigation; Human Rights points are most often taken in support of other causes of action. This makes them very difficult to count separately.

The subjects of the convention rights themselves are, to a very great extent, already actionable in existing domestic law.

For these reasons it would not be possible to apportion costs and compensation payments as requested without reviewing all the cases handled by Departments since October 2000, which would give rise to a disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the *(a)* present living conditions of the civilian population in Fallujah and *(b)* the availability within Fallujah of water and heating facilities. [203610]

Hilary Benn: DFID advisers working with the Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) estimate that most of the population of Fallujah left the city before the recent outbreak of fighting, and that only about 1,500 people remain there.

Electricity and water infrastructure was damaged during the course of military action. However, Iraqi and Multi-National Forces supplied water to civilians as they moved into the city. The IIG and US forces had also stockpiled supplies of water, food and medicine prior to the military operation. The IIG, the Multi-National Force (MNF), and the Red Cross and Iraqi Red Crescent continue to deliver water, food, medical supplies, and shelter to the civilians remaining in Fallujah.

The IIG is in control of the humanitarian and reconstruction work in Fallujah. Significant funds from the Iraqi budget have been set aside so that the city's buildings and services can be rehabilitated. The IIG has established a cross-ministry Fallujah team to coordinate aid and reconstruction for the people of Fallujah. DFID is providing technical advice to the IIG Fallujah team. United States forces and development agencies are also planning to carry out rapid repairs to damaged infrastructure in Fallujah, to ensure that the population has access to basic services as soon as possible.

The majority of Fallujah's population is staying with host families and in public buildings in the surrounding area, and in Baghdad. The Iraqi Ministry of Health is delivering essential supplies to the displaced population, and is providing shelter and blankets to those not under hard cover. The IIG is planning, with the military forces operating in the area; for the return of Fallujah's population to the city as soon as it is safe and essential services are in place

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 session. [201554]

Hilary Benn: DFID had no unanswered questions when Parliament prorogued.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) whether he has been

informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201295]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged. [201378]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for Chichester to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203454]

Hilary Benn: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether departmental Special Advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203499]

Hilary Benn: Any speeches made by Special Advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the 'Code of Conduct for Special Advisers'.

Sudan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the UN Food Programme's decision to suspend operations in Darfur; and what steps have been taken to meet the needs of the people who are out of reach of aid workers as a result. [202803]

Hilary Benn: I am gravely concerned about the situation in Darfur, Sudan and keep a close watch on developments. The World Food Programme's (WFP) decision to suspend operations in north Darfur was in response to attacks on Talwilah town on 22 November. This prompted the UN Security Co-ordinator (UNSECOORD) to stop all UN movement out of the state capital and suspend all UN operations in SLA areas. The tension has eased in some areas allowing food distributions to re-start on 28 November. However, some parts of north Darfur are still designated as "NO GO" for UN personnel. The humanitarian community has tracked an estimated 30,000 people who fled the 22 November attacks and is in the process of registering and providing food and other assistance to them. Insecurity in north Darfur continues to affect the UN and its agencies ability to access all parts of Darfur.

The UK is pressing all parties to the conflict to implement the Abuja humanitarian and security protocols to allowed unfettered access throughout Darfur. We have also provided over £4 million to the World Food Programme for their logistical operations in Darfur and over £1 million to the UN for security operations.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the decision of Sudan's Humanitarian Affairs Commission to expel the country directors of Oxfam and Save the Children; and what the implications are for the provision of food relief in Darfur. [202817]

Hilary Benn: On 29 November, our ambassador in Khartoum raised, with the local authorities, reports of the decision to ask the Directors of Oxfam and Save the Children UK to leave Sudan. The Government of Sudan subsequently indicated that this decision has been suspended until further notice.

It is vital that all humanitarian agencies are given unfettered access to deliver assistance in Darfur. We will continue to make this clear, as necessary to the Government of Sudan.

PRIME MINISTER

City Academies

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Prime Minister whether Mr. Andrew Adonis of his Policy Unit has visited the City of Newcastle upon Tyne to promote city academies in the last 12 months. [204438]

The Prime Minister: My officials and I have meetings and discussions with a wide range of organisations and individuals. A with previous Administrations it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings, under Exemptions 2 and 7 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Foreign Press Articles

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list articles written by Members of his Government in an official capacity that have been published in the foreign press over the past 12 months; and if he will place copies in the Library *(a)* of these articles and *(b)* as a matter of course in the future. [204111]

The Prime Minister: The information requested is not held centrally.

Iraq

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Prime Minister if he will set up an independent inquiry to determine how many Iraqis have been killed or injured since the invasion of Iraq in 2003. [204264]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Carmichael) at Prime Minister's questions on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1166–67.

Pakistan

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister whether he raised the prospect of Pakistan signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty during his discussions with President Musharraf of Pakistan on 6 December. [204325]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of bilateral and international issues, including those relating to nuclear weapons proliferation, during President Musharraf's recent visit.

I also refer my hon. Friend to the joint statement released and press conference I held with President Musharraf on 6 December, both of which are available on the Number 10 website.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister whether his Special Advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203445]

The Prime Minister: Special Advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister how many complaints were made by civil servants regarding the conduct of Special Advisers for whom he is responsible between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203462]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly).

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister whether his Special Advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203508]

The Prime Minister: Any speeches made by Special Advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister whether his special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204302]

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Telecommunications

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Prime Minister whether his office has made representations to *(a)* Wycombe district council, *(b)* mobile telephone network providers and *(c)* the Thames Valley police on plans to locate a radio base station at Missenden Road, Buckmoorend, Butler's Cross; and if he will make a statement. [204090]

The Prime Minister: Neither I nor my office have made any representations to these organisations.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Prime Minister how many officials working in ministerial private offices in his Office have worked more than a 48-hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204171]

The Prime Minister: Officials in my private office who work more than 48 hours a week as defined by the working time regulations have signed a waiver.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Film Classification

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has to change British film classifications. [203587]

Estelle Morris: The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) is the independent body responsible for classifying all films, DVDs and videos available to the public in the UK. The Department has no plans to change the existing arrangements. Local authorities, which are statutorily responsible for issuing cinema licences, have the power either to change the BBFC's classification of a specific film, or to refuse to allow it to be shown in their areas.

Olympic Medal Winners

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many requests to have Olympic medal winners visit secondary schools have been met by UK Sport in 2004. [204483]

Mr. Caborn: UK Sport has not received any such requests.

Park Refurbishment (Liverpool)

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding the Heritage Lottery Fund has provided for the refurbishment of parks in Liverpool since 1997, broken down by *(a)* park and *(b)* organisations to which funding was made. [203042]

Mr. Caborn: Since 1997, the Heritage Lottery Fund has made one award to parks in Liverpool. The award of £2,442,000 was made in 1998 to Liverpool City council for the restoration of the Grade II* listed Palm House in Sefton Park.

Public Swimming Pools

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many public swimming pools there are in England. [204386]

Mr. Caborn: According to the most recent Sport England figures, there are a total of 3,484 swimming pools in England, including main, learner, diving, leisure and outdoor pools.

Of these, 2,662 are open to the public.

Regional Archive Councils

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the estimated public expenditure on the regional archive councils in England was in the latest year for which figures are available. [203558]

Estelle Morris: The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (Resource at that point) awarded a grant of £28,125 to support Regional Archive Councils (or their equivalent) to be distributed by the National Council on Archives in 2003–04 as £3,125 to be distributed to each English RAC. MLA has always stated that its revenue

support for the RACs would finish permanently in March 2004 when all Regional Agencies would be up and running.

Regional Sports Boards

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the estimated public expenditure on the regional sports boards in England was in the latest year for which figures are available. [203559]

Mr. Caborn: Details of the 2004–05 budget for the public expenditure (Exchequer and Lottery) of Sport England's regional offices are given in the table.

£000

Region	Awards distributed	Direct delivery costs	Other running costs	Total
East	9,128	39	989	10,156
East Midlands	14,868	44	1,041	15,953
London	12,802	60	1,066	13,927
North East	11,915	46	930	12,891
North West	26,849	74	1,249	28,172
South East	14,514	51	1,333	15,899
South West	10,394	38	952	11,384
West Midlands	13,183	46	1,061	14,290
Yorkshire	9,054	44	1,022	10,120

School Sport

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much of the £750 million pledged by the Prime Minister to school sport *(a)* has been spent and *(b)* is planned to be spent in the West Midlands. [203586]

Mr. Caborn: £750.75 million is available to local education authorities for the New Opportunities for PE and Sport (NOPES) programme: £581.25 million in England; £87 million in Scotland; £48.75 million in Wales; and £33.75 in Northern Ireland.

In October 2004, £446.65 million of NOPES funding had been committed for 2026 facilities, with £40.1 million being drawn-down by the local education authorities.

West Midlands local education authorities have been allocated £61.27 million of NOPES funding. Of this amount, £46.45 million is committed expenditure.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204509]

Mr. Caborn: Cabinet Office publishes an annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service". The most recently published figures for the calendar year 2003 were announced by Written Ministerial Statement on 1 November 2004, and copies placed in the Libraries of the House.

DCMS is committed to managing sickness absence effectively.

Sports Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people are employed by *(a)* Sport England East, *(b)* Sport England East Midlands, *(c)* Sport England London, *(d)* Sport England North East, *(e)* Sport England North West, *(f)* Sport England South East, *(g)* Sport England South West, *(h)* Sport England West Midlands and *(i)* Sport England Yorkshire; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of each body. [203754]

Mr. Caborn: The number of staff employed by each of Sport England's regional offices on a full-time equivalent basis as at October 2004, and the budget for the 2004–05 running costs of each regional office, are shown in the table.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport keeps Sport England under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that its functions are still required and that it still provides the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Region	Number of staff (FTE)	Budget for running costs (£000)
East	15	989
East Midlands	13	1,041
London	14	1,066
North East	16	930
North West	16	1,249
South East	20	1,333
South West	17	952
West Midlands	16	1,061
Yorkshire	14	1,022

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

14 to 16 Education

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his intention to continue the 14 to 16 years old increased flexibility programme. [203996]

Mr. Miliband: An announcement will be made shortly.

16 to 18 Education

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, how many extra 16 to 18 year olds he expects to stay in education as a result of the education maintenance allowance in the London Borough of Barnet. [203997]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since the start of the academic year, as of 30 November 2004, 751 young people in the Barnet local authority area have received payments under the national EMA scheme. The number is increasing at a steady rate and we expect it to continue to do so. In 2004/05 across England we expect the number of 16 to 18 year olds participating in education to increase by 35,000 (3.8 percentage points) as a direct result of EMA.

By 2006/07, when EMA is available to all eligible 16 to 18 year olds, an additional 72,000 young people will be in further education.

Academics (EU Funding)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list UK academics who have been in receipt of EU funds over the past three years. [204178]

Dr. Howells: We do not hold information on EU funding awards to individual academics. Most academics receive such funding via their institutions.

Barnet Schools and Colleges

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures he is taking to eliminate the funding gap between schools and colleges in the London borough of Barnet. [203994]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* For the academic year 2003/04, base funding rates per qualification increased by 3 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 4.5 per cent. for further education colleges on a broadly comparable basis. In 2004/05, funding rates for colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent., while those for school sixth forms rose by 4 per cent. We expect to see this trend continue in the 2005/06 academic year.

Bullying

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what schemes to counter bullying have received public funding in the last seven years. [203202]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department funds a number of key voluntary sector organisations to support anti-bullying work. The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), an umbrella group of over 50 voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and leading authorities, has been provided with funding of £600,000 to link with the work of the Department on addressing bullying behaviour.

In 2004/05, the Department has given just over £190,000 to Parentline Plus to support their helpline for parents and we have also provided ChildLine in Partnership with Schools Programme (CHIPS) with £164,000 for anti-bullying work involving peer support. This autumn the Department has provided a grant for the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Award to create a dedicated anti-bullying award for schools to recognise the achievements of young people who are leading on work in tackling bullying in their schools and communities. It has not been possible to obtain details of previous years' funding in the time available. But I will place these details in the Libraries shortly.

CAFCASS

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the turnover of CAFCASS staff was in each family court area in the last year for which figures are available; what the turnover of staff at each contact centre was; and how many and what percentage of no-shows for arranged contacts there were in each contact centre. [202710]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Children's Commissioner for England

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, how much will be spent per head of child population by the Children's Commissioner for England in 2005–06. [203277]

Margaret Hodge: Our Explanatory Note for the Children Bill gave our estimate that the Children's Commissioner's budget will be in the region of £2.5 million. We are reviewing the position in the light of the final provisions in the Act following Royal Assent The figure reflects the nature of the Children's Commissioner's duties in England, and the economies of scale not available to his colleagues elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he expects to confirm the appointment of a Children's Commissioner for England. [203278]

Margaret Hodge: We hope to be able to announce the name of the Children's Commissioner at the end of February 2005, with the successful candidate taking up the post in the early summer.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in the Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [200826]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department's target for the 2004 calendar year is to reply to correspondence within 15 working days of receipt. This target is the same for correspondence from hon. Members, and for officials in the Department to reply to correspondence received directly from members of the public.

Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament/Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, how many television advertisements his Department has commissioned on *(a)* terrestrial and *(b)* satellite television channels in the last 12 months; and what the cost was in each case. [201311]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In the financial year 2004/05, the Department has produced the following television advertisements.

Campaign	Number	Cost of buying advertising space (£000)
Educational Maintenance Allowance	4	3,167
Adult Basic Skills	2	3,905

It is only possible to differentiate costs between Terrestrial TV and Satellite channels at disproportionate cost. TV advertisements have been transmitted across both medium in most cases.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what criteria are used by his Department to determine *(a)* on which satellite television channels advertisements on behalf of his Department and its agencies are screened and *(b)* the frequency of screenings of advertisements. [201312]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The criteria used by my Department for all campaigns are individually assessed to take into account the campaign objectives, the target audience and any specific regional factors.

The aim is always to secure the most effective advertising slots, to match the brief at the most competitive prices, within the budget allocated.

Frequency of screening will depend on a consideration of how many times an audience needs to see the message before it will achieve the desired effect and the size of the audience for any particular television spot.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what discussions he has held with the devolved administrations relating to the content, frequency and timing of television advertising placed by his Department on UK-wide satellite television channels. [201321]

Mr. Twigg: We do not discuss content, frequency and timing of television advertisements with the devolved administrations. Advertisements appearing on satellite channels avoid possible confusion by stating that they apply to England only.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [200823]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The cost to my Department for in-house canteen in 2002–03 was £11,701 and in 2003–04 £42,316. These costs include all contract costs but exclude associated accommodation and utility costs.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total external spending by his Department was on public-private partnership consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200835]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The only Public Private Partnership my Department is involved with is for the delivery of the Connexions Card and no consultants have been used in the last two years.

Early Years Education

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children he estimates will benefit from changes in baseline spending on *(a)* nursery education and *(b)* Sure Start in 2007–08. [199716]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Free part-time nursery education is an entitlement for all three and four-year-olds whose parents wish to take it up. From population projections we predict that 1,116,200 children will benefit in 2006–07 and 1,141,000 in 2007–08. We are unable to quote baseline spending on nursery education as this is now included in local authorities under 5's sub block of funding.

The "10 year early years and childcare strategy", published on 2 December, aims to ensure that every child gets the best start in life and that parents have more choice about how to balance work and family life. The additional money announced in the pre- Budget report on 2 December brings the baseline spend for Sure Start in 2007–08 to £1.78 billion.

By 2008, 2,500 Sure Start children's centres will be operating, and all young children and their families in both the most disadvantaged areas, and in other areas will have access to integrated health, early education, child care and family support. By 2010 the number of children's centres will increase to 3,500, with a children's centre in every community.

The present stock of registered child care places is 1,164,545 for 0–7-year-olds. The Department has a target to create an extra 1,212,892 places by March 2008. By 2008 a significant proportion of primary schools will offer wrap around child care during term time and school holidays, and a third of all secondary schools will be open from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. year round offering a range of exciting activities for young people. We do not currently have an estimate of the number of children who will take up this offer. By 2010 there will be child care guarantee with child care available for all children aged between 3–14 between the hours of 8 a.m.–6 p.m.

Education (Parity of Resources)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to ensure parity of resources provided to further education colleges and schools. [204080]

Dr. Howells: For the academic year 2003/04, base funding rates per qualification increased by 3 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 4.5 per cent. for further education colleges on a broadly comparable basis. In 2004/05, funding rates for colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent., while those for school sixth forms rose by 4 per cent. We expect to see this trend continue in the 2005/06 academic year.

Education Funding

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he is taking to tackle the funding gap between schools and post-16 colleges; and if he will make a statement. [203642]

Dr. Howells: Government have taken action to narrow the funding gap between school sixth forms and post-16 further education colleges. For the academic year 2003/04, base funding rates per qualification increased by 3 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 4.5 per cent. for further education colleges on a broadly comparable basis. In 2004/05, funding rates for colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent., while those for school sixth forms rose by 4 per cent. We expect to see this trend continue in the 2005/06 academic year.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of his Department's budget he expects will be spent on *(a)* schools, *(b)* under-fives provision and *(c)* the teaching of A levels or highers in each year from 2005–06 to 2007–08. [202739]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is not possible to give a breakdown in precisely these categories. The following table shows the proportion of the Department's resources I expect to be spent in the areas shown. These figures are based on current planning assumptions and are, therefore, indicative only and subject to change. They do not include resources within the local government finance settlement.

Percentage

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Under-fives, sure start and childcare	4	5	5
Schools, excluding schools sixth forms	31	30	31
School sixth forms and 16–18 provision in further education, excluding work based training for young people	13	14	14

16–18 provision in further education includes both academic and vocation provision at all levels of the National Qualifications Framework, and the funding made available in the 2004 Spending Review for 16–18 buildings and facilities.

There is a slight drop in the proportion of my Department's resources that I expect to be spent on schools in 2006/07 followed by a rise in 2007/08. This is the combined consequence of

Differential overall rates of increase in revenue and capital expenditure over the period

Funding from my Department for schools including a higher proportion of capital expenditure than for other sectors.

The remainder of the Department's resources for the period are allocated as follows:

Percentage

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Children, young people and families	4	4	4
Further education and skills	19	18	18
Higher education	27	27	27
Activity to support all functions	2	1	1

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total funding per head in real terms was for pupils aged *(a)* three-10 years and *(b)* 11–15 years in (i) the City of Newcastle upon Tyne (ii) England, (iii) local education authorities in the North East region and (iv) local education authorities in Tyne and Wear; in each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05. [204407]

Mr. Miliband: The figures requested are set out as follows.

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Total funding per pupil aged three-10 in real terms								
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,530	2,510	2,680	2,930	3,120	3,230	3,460	3,570
England	2,380	2,470	2,630	2,860	3,020	3,100	3,290	3,410
North East	2,240	2,350	2,510	2,750	2,940	3,030	3,270	3,380
Tyne and Wear	2,270	2,370	2,530	2,780	2,960	3,080	3,330	3,430
Total funding per pupil aged 11–15 in real terms								
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,370	3,470	3,570	3,980	4,280	4,290	4,370	4,530
England	3,260	3,320	3,440	3,730	3,930	4,010	4,080	4,260
North East	3,210	3,270	3,400	3,740	3,990	4,020	4,130	4,290
Tyne and Wear	3,240	3,310	3,430	3,800	4,060	4,080	4,220	4,350

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of per capita education funding in *(a)* Birmingham and *(b)* Hodge Hill in each of the next three years. [204190]

Mr. Miliband: No specific estimate has been made of per capita education funding in Birmingham in the next three years but I would draw the attention of the hon. Member to the announcement made on 2 December regarding the local government settlement for 2005–06. Information is available on the Teachernet website at the following address http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/ together with information about the Government's proposals regarding three-year budgets for schools, part of the five-year strategy.

Exeter University

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with Exeter University about the closure of the university's chemistry school; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the closure *(a)* on students studying chemistry at the university and *(b)* on the numbers of chemistry graduates. [201993]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State has not had any direct discussions with Exeter University about the closure of its chemistry department. The Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) is monitoring the situation closely. I understand that the university is working closely with the students to ensure that all their individual needs are met. It has, for

example, given assurances that those undergraduates who wish to complete their chemistry course at Exeter will be able to do so. A number of other institutions have also said they are willing to accept transfers if necessary.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) when and by whom his Department was informed of the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202616]

(2) when the Vice Chancellor of the university of Exeter informed his Department of the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202625]

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) when the Vice Chancellor of the university of Exeter informed his Department of the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202644]

(2) when and by whom his Department was informed of the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision. [202648]

Dr. Howells: The Department was informed informally by the Vice-Chancellor of the proposed closure of the chemistry department at Exeter in early November, prior to the formal announcement on 22 November. I met Royal Society of Chemistry on 1 December to discuss the closure and its implications.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England is monitoring the situation closely.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision on the Government's 10-Year Investment Framework for Science and Innovation. [202694]

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what assessment he has made of the impact of closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision on the Government's 10-Year Investment Framework for Science and Innovation; and if he will make a statement. [202899]

Dr. Howells: I do not at this stage believe that the closure of Exeter University's chemistry department will adversely affect the 10-Year Investment Framework for Science and Innovation. However, as set out in the framework, I have asked HEFCE to set up an expert group, including business and scientific leaders, to review how falling SET provision will affect long-term regional and national economic development, and whether there is a greater role to be played by business, funding councils, HEIs and other stakeholders.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. HEFCE is monitoring the situation closely.

International Student Assessment Study

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 54W, on the International Student Assessment Study, for what reason an assurance of confidentiality was given to schools invited to co-operate with the OECD PISA study before they decided whether to co-operate. [204012]

Mr. Miliband: The National Statistics Code of Practice Protocol on Data Access and Confidentiality, paragraph 2a states:

> "A guarantee of confidentiality will be given, at the time of collection, to respondents to National Statistics surveys and censuses."

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the reasons for schools' failure to respond to the OECD PISA survey. [204013]

Mr. Miliband: Administering the PISA tests and questionnaires is a significant undertaking by schools, and the PISA fieldwork takes place at an important time in the school calendar. I can therefore understand that it is not always a straightforward decision for schools to participate in PISA, and that it is their right to refuse if they wish to. The burden of PISA for schools is an inescapable part of them participating in the study, but we will need to make sure we fully recognise and take account of the difficulties schools face as we plan for PISA 2006.

Learning and Skills Council

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what the *(a)* recurrent and *(b)* non-recurrent expenditure of the Learning and Skills Council was in 2004–05; and what the estimates are for (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07. [204046]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Literacy/Numeracy

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* Key Stage 2 pupils and *(b)* Key Stage 3 pupils have reached the required standards in both literacy and numeracy in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [203526]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is placed in the Library.

Figures for 2004 by parliamentary constituency are not yet available, but will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list his official engagements over the past six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202407]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business and as part of the process of policy

development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers' public engagements.

Parenting Plan

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he expects the first Parenting Plan to be approved. [203942]

Margaret Hodge: The Government is currently revising the existing Parenting Plans material to include clear examples of good contact arrangements that work well for children of different ages and circumstances. The plans will be published and promoted widely, by April 2005.

The revised Parenting Plans will provide guidance for families about a range of co-operative parenting arrangements appropriate for families in differing circumstances. They are intended to be used as practical aids, both by parents themselves as well as by solicitors, conciliators and mediators, to assist parents to reach reasonable agreements. They will seek to illustrate what the courts might well decide if the case went to a full hearing. The plans will be available at all points throughout the system—in solicitors' offices as well as through advice and mediation services.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201543]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: There were no unanswered written questions for this Department when Parliament prorogued.

Pay Bargaining Unit

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times the appraisal system for each pay bargaining unit in his Department has been changed in the last five years; and how many staff are fully or partly employed in connection with pay negotiations in each pay bargaining unit, broken down by grade. [200347]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department reviews its appraisal systems annually and makes changes as appropriate in line with central rules regarding appraisal as set out in Chapter 6 of the Civil Service Management Code. Small changes to simplify the system have been introduced over the last five years. The current appraisal system was introduced in April 2004.

My Department has one pay bargaining unit with one Grade 7 and one Higher Executive Officer partly employed on pay negotiations. Final negotiating meetings are chaired at Grade 6 or SCS level after the main negotiations are completed. My Department concluded its 3 years pay deal in October 2003.

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Phil Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, how much is being spent on pupil referral units in 2004–05; and what plans he has for *(a)* creating more pupil referral units and *(b)* increasing capacity at existing ones. [202911]

Mr. Miliband: The expected spend by Local Education Authorities on Pupil Referral Units in 2004/05 is £198,460,713.

The number of PRU places has risen substantially since 1997. In January 1997 there were 7,530 pupils in PRUs compared to 13,040 in January 2004. The number of PRUs has also risen—there are now more than 440 PRUs compared to only 309 in January 1997.

LEAs have the power and funding to set up or expand the Pupil Referral Units that they need. We expect them to keep this under review and to use the guidance my Department will be issuing shortly to ensure sufficient good quality provision exists.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201364]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201430]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skill's special advisers have not had any interviews attributed to them in their official capacity between March 2003 and March 2004. All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203449]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Special Advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203509]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Special Schools (Gloucestershire)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, how many special school places are available in Gloucestershire; and where they are located. [203181]

Margaret Hodge: Gloucestershire local education authority, in its School Organisation Plan, identified the number of places available in maintained special schools as follows:

Establishment Name	*Town*	*Places*
Alderman Knight School	Tewkesbury	130
Amberley Ridge School	Stroud	70
Battledown Children's Centre	Cheltenham	40
Belmont School	Cheltenham	120
Bettridge School	Cheltenham	100
Cam House School	Dursley	60
Coin House School	Fairford	70
Dean Hall School	Coleford	120
Oakdene School	Cinderford	40
Paternoster School	Cirencester	53
Sandford School	Cheltenham	100
The Milestone School	Gloucester	240
The Shrubberies School	Stonehouse	70

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in special schools in Cheltenham have previously been in mainstream schools. [203182]

Margaret Hodge: This information is not collected centrally.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were educated in special schools in Gloucestershire in each of the past eight years. [203183]

Margaret Hodge: The numbers of full-time and part-time pupils educated in both maintained and non-maintained special schools in Gloucestershire are given below.

	Full time	*Part time*
1997	1,270	150
1998	1,270	130
1999	1,230	90
2000	1,150	70
2001	1,030	90
2002	1,070	60
2003	990	70
2004	970	60

Staff Redundancies

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the figure of 1,460 job reductions planned for his Department was arrived at; and if he will make a statement. [204522]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners published in July 2004 sets out an ambitious agenda for reform and makes clear that delivery of the Strategy will require a major reform of the Department, one involving a radical transformation of its role and ways of working, changes that will lead to a smaller, more strategic Department. It is in this context that the staffing reduction of 1,460 (31 per cent.) by 2008 was arrived at.

Swimming

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school children are receiving regular swimming lessons at school; and what percentage have passed the swimming qualifications set by the national curriculum in the last five years. [203703]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* We do not collect the information in the format requested.

Our Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links strategy, being implemented jointly with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, provides targeted support to enhance school swimming. To date this has included the development of a safe swimming website; the publication of the Swimming Charter which contains guidance and examples of best practice and running two pilots to test the effectiveness of top up swimming lessons for those key stage 2 pupils at risk of not being able to swim the statutory 25 metre target.

A survey carried out jointly by the Times Educational Supplement and the Central Council for Physical Recreation, published on 1 August 2003 found that 84 per cent., or five in six, pupils are able to safely swim at least 25 metres by the end of key stage 2. This is a modest improvement on the position reported to us by Ofsted in 2000(when 80 per cent., or four in five pupils in England, achieved this target.

Teachers (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers were employed in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Pendle in each year since 1992. [204084]

Mr. Miliband: The following table gives the full time equivalent number of teachers in maintained primary and secondary schools in Pendle constituency in each year between 1997 and 2004, the latest year for which constituency level data are available. Information is not available prior to 1997.

	Primary	*Secondary*
1997	360	340
1998	360	340
1999	370	340
2000	360	350
2001	360	360
2002	360	360
2003	360	360
2004	350	350

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual School Census

Three-year School Budgets

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what consultation took place with *(a)* local education authorities, *(b)* schools and *(c)* representatives of teachers before the change to three-year school budgets with ring-fenced grants and minimum funding guarantees; and if he will place the consultation document and a summary of responses in the Library. [204045]

Mr. Miliband: The Department for Education and Skills has been working closely with representatives of local education authorities, schools, and the teacher unions to further develop the proposals on three year budgets for schools set out in the five year strategy for children and learners. A consultation document will be issued early in the new year: a copy will be placed in the House Library when it is published, as will a summary of the responses after the consultation period has finished.

Training Funding

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research his Department has undertaken to ascertain the willingness of employers to pay for training. [203998]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department has not commissioned any research specifically to investigate the willingness of employers to pay for training. However, the Learning and Training At Work Survey in 2000 researched how much employers do pay for training and the 2002 report "The Nature of Training and Motivation to Train in Small Firms" by John Kitching and Robert Blackburn contains a section on the barriers to training (including financial barriers). Both reports are in the House of Commons Library.

Vardy Foundation

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether public funds will be awarded to the Vardy Foundation to sponsor academies. [204261]

Mr. Miliband: Academies are established by Academy Trusts. Sponsors contribute 10 per cent. of the capital costs of an academy to the Trust, up to a cap of £2 million, from their own funds. The DfES pays the balance of the capital costs to the individual Trust, not to the sponsor, according to a budget agreed with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. I am grateful to The Vardy Foundation for the generous contribution of £2 million towards the capital costs of each of the two academy projects that they are currently sponsoring.

Vocational Education (Barnet)

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what plans he has to expand vocational education and training for adults in the London Borough of Barnet. [203995]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library. The Government's Skills Strategy, 21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential (July 2003), set out its plans for increasing opportunities for adults to develop their skills. In addition, the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report last week announced the extension of our Employer Training Pilots to all areas from 2006/07 and a New Deal for Skills to help the unemployed secure the training they need for sustainable employment.

Young People

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what mechanisms have been put in place by his Department to allow regular consultation with young people on all aspects of policy; [200356]

(2) what process is used by his Department to select young people for consultation on policy. [200359]

Margaret Hodge: My Department has carried out a number of major consultations with children and young people on key policy issues. Active involvement of children and young people is an integral part of my department's policy-making process.

In preparing the Government's Change for Children programme, as set out in 'Every Child Matters', over 3,000 children and young people—who were selected from voluntary organisations and local youth groups—took part in the consultation. A Children and Youth Board has been formed, selected from voluntary organisations and other organisations to ensure children's participation in the design of children's services. Children and Young people will be involved in various ways in the appointment of the Children's Commissioner, including carrying out their own assessment of the candidates.

My Department provides core funding for the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and other youth organisations to give expert advice on government policies for children and young people, including the Youth Green paper. The 400 Members of the UK Youth Parliament are elected through local authority (LEA) area-based elections. Through the British Youth Council and other youth groups, young people are actively involved in developing the Government's forthcoming Youth Green paper.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Charities (Trustees)

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which charities have applied for and been granted a waiver of disqualification for a trustee in the last 12 months; and on what grounds in each case. [200463]

Fiona Mactaggart: This is a matter for the Charity Commission as the Government department responsible for the regulation of charities in England and Wales. The Director of Legal Services at the Charity Commission will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Gypsies and Travellers

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, under what ethnic status gypsies and travellers are classified in relation to anti-discrimination legislation. [201669]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) protects all individuals from direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation on racial grounds in the fields of employment and training, the provision of goods facilities and services, education, housing and other public authority functions (with certain limited exceptions). "Racial grounds" is defined in the 1976 as meaning on grounds of of colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins, but the Act does not specify which particular groups meet these criteria. That is a matter for the courts. Subsequent case law has established that discrimination in the fields covered by the Race Relations Act against an individual on grounds of being Romany gypsy or Irish traveller constitutes unlawful racial discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin.

Hizb at Tahrir

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make a statement on the activities of Hizb at Tahrir. [199714]

Mr. Blunkett: Hizb ut Tahrir is a political movement active in a number of countries. Its UK branch is a fringe group with extremist views including advocacy of the establishment of an Islamic state. It has attracted very little support from British Muslims.

Home Affairs Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the outcome was of the Justice and Home Affairs Council held on 19 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [199872]

Caroline Flint: I represented the United Kingdom at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Brussels on the 19 November 2004.

A list of 'A' points approved at the Council has been placed in the Library (Document PTS A 5414827/04). Included in these was the formal agreement of the Council Decision appointing the President and members of the European Commission.

The main discussion at the Council centred around the role and positioning of the Police Chiefs Task Force (PCTF) with a view to strengthening EU operational police co-operation. The Presidency put forward a compromise proposal with the effect that the Task Force will work alongside the Article 36 Committee. I was able to support this compromise proposal as it will allow the Task Force to draw on Europol's analyses and support when planning operations but also allow the chiefs of police to feed in substantive advice and views at a senior level when the Council agrees on strategic priorities of the fight against organised crime. The Council agreed the proposal.

Over lunch, the EU's Counter Terrorist Co-ordinator (de Vries) updated the Council on the EU's role in the fight against terrorism.

There was further debate on the Framework Decision on Ship Source Pollution. No conclusion was reached and so this will be discussed again at the December JHA Council.

The Council also discussed the EU Drugs Strategy 2005–2012. A general approach was agreed by the Council on the Strategy. I look forward to supporting this development of work on the fight to reduce the harm caused by drugs once Parliament has had a chance to properly scrutinise the document.

The Council agreed the Directive for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research without substantive discussion. The UK has not opted in to this Directive.

The Council discussed common principles for integration policy in the EU. The Presidency introduced the draft council conclusions (14776/04 MIGR 105) setting out common basic principles to assist member states in formulating their integration policies. I noted that work in this area would be carried forward during the Luxembourg and UK Presidencies. The text was adopted.

Knives

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded offences in which knives were used were committed in each of the last five years. [199908]

Caroline Flint: This information is not collected centrally. The number of offences involving knives are not separated out in the recorded crime statistics. The Homicide Index holds details on the number of homicides where the apparent method of killing was the use of a sharp instrument. The available information from 1998–99 to 2002–03 is given in the table.

We recognise the problem of knife carrying and are working on a strategy to tackle this.

	Number of homicides involving the use of a sharp instrument
1998–99	202
1999–2000	213
2000–01	214
2001–02	262
2002–03	272

RAF Fairford

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times stop and search powers were used under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 by each police authority operating in the vicinity of RAF Fairford during the two periods of authorisation covering 6 March to 27 April 2003. [199416]

Mr. Blunkett: Gloucestershire Constabulary has informed me that during the period 6 March to 27 April 2003, 2,254 stop-searches were conducted under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

The authorisation of Section 44 powers was made by Gloucestershire Constabulary, and the related operation was also under the authority of Gloucestershire Constabulary. Therefore, although a number of forces took part in the policing operation at RAF Fairford at this time, all stop-searches that took place are recorded in the statistics provided by that force.

There is a discrepancy in the figure given above and a figure previously provided to a parliamentary question asked by Adam Price MP that was answered on 15 October 2003. Gloucestershire police then provided the figure of 2,132 section 44 stop-searches conducted between 6 March and 27 April 2003. The force has informed me that the discrepancy between the statistics in the two answers occurred because some stop-searches were omitted from the earlier total in error. The figures have been subject to review and Gloucestershire police has verified the figure given in this answer as accurate.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether swords were seized from protesters at RAF Fairford under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 1994; and whether potentially dangerous weapons were seized from the protesters under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. [200602]

Mr. Blunkett: As I made clear in my answers to the Home Affairs Committee, the powers under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 are intended to allow the police to seize offensive weapons where they believe serious violence may take place. I cannot comment further on particular cases, some of which are subject to appeal. I understand that a range of items were seized from protesters using section 60. Contrary to my understanding at the time, I now understand that these did not include swords. During the security operation at RAF Fairford, police took items from 28 people as a result of searches that were conducted under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. These included a kite, white powder, controlled drugs, cameras and camera equipment, and a scanner.

Reoffending

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have absconded from each prison in each of the last five years; and how many have not been recovered. [199976]

Paul Goggins: A list of the number of prisoners absconding from open prisons and semi-open prisons in each of the last five years is set out in the table.

Absconds reported from open and semi-open prisons since 1999

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*31 October 2004*	*Totals*
Open prisons							
Askham Grange	18	20	19	14	24	18	113
East Sutton Park	1	4	2	0	1	1	9
Drake Hall	103	38	37	—	—	—	178
Ford	56	69	50	86	127	108	496
Moorland —Hatfield)	43	44	42	41	81	59	310
Morton Hall	23	10	—	—	—	—	33
Hewell Grange	28	24	16	21	25	23	137
Hollesley Bay	13	23	8	14	31	31	120
Kirkham	163	183	154	187	219	138	1044
Leyhill	35	25	17	25	103	89	294
North Sea Camp	30	20	42	30	72	35	229
Norwich —Britannia House)	—	—	—	—	—	5	5
Prescoed	14	19	5	8	25	27	98
Spring Hill	14	13	14	13	59	33	146
Standford Hill	28	29	36	70	98	33	294
Sudbury	60	72	82	65	77	66	422
Thorn Cross	144	108	128	160	138	74	752
Wealstun	67	90	90	82	157	64	550
Open Totals	840	791	742	816	1237	804	5230
Semi-open prisons							
Blantyre House	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Drake Hall	—	—	0	0	1	0	1
Kirklevington	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Latchmere House	0	0	3	1	0	0	4
Morton Hall	—	—	0	0	0	0	0
Semi open totals	0	1	3	3	1	2	10

Open prisons Morton Hall and Drake Hall were re-rolled as semi-open prisons.
In March 2004 Norwich prison established Britannia House as an open unit

Figures for those prisoners who remain unlawfully at large cannot be obtained other than at disproportionate cost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (1) if he will list the attributable interviews

that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201427]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201452]

Mr. Blunkett: All special advisers' contacts with the media, and speeches and presentations made by them are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the 'Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.' A list of the attributable articles and interviews made by my Departmental Special Advisers can not be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Stop and Search

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will place in the Library guidance to police forces following the publication of an ethnic breakdown of stop and search under the Terrorism Act 2000 on 2 July 2004. [202974]

Mr. Blunkett: The Stop and Search Action Team (SSAT) was launched on 2 July 2004. SSAT is working towards the production of a Stop and Search manual which will include guidance on all Stop and Search powers, including those under the Terrorism Act 2000. Publication of the manual is expected in early 2005 and a copy will be placed in the Library.

UK Visas

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of those granted UK work permits were refused entry clearance by UK Visas, broken down by nationality, in the last year for which figures are available. [201849]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

Information on the proportion of those granted work permits and refused entry clearance by nationality for the financial year 2003–04 can be found on the UKvisas website www.ukvisas.gov.uk at "Entry Clearance: Facts and Figures", pages 46–54.

Vehicle Searches

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make it his policy to collect data on the ethnicity of individuals whose vehicles are searched under section 44(1) of the Terrorism Act 2000. [201387]

Mr. Blunkett: Details are collected on the ethnicity of those who have been stopped and searched under section 44(1) of the Terrorism Act 2000.

Ethnicity data relating to the use of these powers has most recently been published in table 4.8 in the Home Office publication 'Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2003', published in July 2004, which is available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/section951.html

X-Ray Scanners

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the health implications of the increased usage of x-ray scanners on the general public. [201823]

Mr. Blunkett: The Secretary of State for the Home Department takes great care to ensure the safety of any security system deployed by the Home Office on behalf of the public. Public safety is established through the expertise of the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), who advise on the implications of using x-ray scanners and other systems. All equipment deployed by the Home Office has to meet strict standards and guidelines set by NRPB. Wherever x-ray equipment is deployed, radiation levels are carefully monitored by suitably qualified scientific staff to ensure the safety of the public.

WORK AND PENSIONS

IT Procurement

17. **David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent assessment has been made of his Department's IT procurement strategy. [203865]

Mr. Pond: The DWP Information Systems and Information Technology strategy was reviewed in 2002, and a new procurement strategy was formulated to support it. In line with Treasury guidance, we have moved away from PFI and are seeking to access a much wider range of suppliers.

National Insurance Numbers

18. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the issuing of national insurance numbers. [203866]

Mr. Pond: The vast majority of national insurance numbers are issued to UK-born residents automatically at the age of 15 years and nine months through the juvenile registration process. This process is triggered through a claim to child benefit.

Adult NINO allocation is administered by Jobcentre Plus. The vast majority of these allocations are to people entering the UK from abroad.

Benefit Calculations

19. **Paul Farrelly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will reform the housing and council tax benefit rules to exclude pension credit receipts from the calculation of entitlements. [203867]

Mr. Pond: For people who are in receipt of the guarantee element of pension credit, all of their income and capital is disregarded when their entitlement to housing benefit and council tax benefit is calculated. This includes the pension credit itself

Retaining a capital limit for those not entitled to the guarantee credit element of pension credit helps us ensure that benefit goes to those people who need the most help; we have no plans to change this.

Child Support Agency

20. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the working of the Child Support Agency. [203868]

Mr. Pond: The agency now collects over £280 million more in child maintenance than it did in 1997–98. In 2003–04 alone, it collected over £600 million in total.

We are continuing to work towards improving the services we provide. We have always made it clear that old scheme cases will not be transferred to the new scheme until we are sure that the new arrangements are working well.

Money continues to flow under the old scheme to children. We are not willing to risk that flow of money and put at risk these cases by bringing them across before we are sure that the new system is robust.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the current length of wait is for assessment by the Child Support Agency once a case has been referred off computer to the manual clerical system. [202292]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Bob Spink, dated 13 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the current length of wait is for assessment by the CSA once a case has been referred off computer to the manual clerical system.

Our current estimate is that it takes on average 16 weeks to make a maintenance calculation from the date of initial referral to a clerical case team.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many child support cases the Child Support Agency is dealing with relating to people in Greater London; and if he will make a statement. [202728]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Tom Cox, dated 13 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many child support cases the Child Support Agency is dealing with relating to people in Greater London; and if he will make a statement.

We are unable to provide the information as we do not separately identify those cases that relate to people in the Greater London area.

Atos Origin

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the levels of performance against the key performance targets in respect of Atos Origin for each month since Atos Origin (formerly Schlumberger Sema) was awarded the Benefits Medical Assessment Contract; on how many occasions a financial remedy has been applied to Atos Origin in respect of this contract; how much the financial remedy was on each of these occasions; and if he will make a statement. [200245]

Maria Eagle: Details of the levels of achievement against the key performance targets in each of the three contract packages for the period June 2003 to October 2004 have been placed in the Library.

Service credits for failure to meet contractual service level targets have been applied as appropriate in each month during the above period.

Specific details of service credits for failure to meet contractual service level targets are commercial in confidence and not disclosed under part 2, paragraph 13 of the code of practice on access to government information.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimates he has made of *(a)* confirmed, *(b)* high suspicion and *(c)* low suspicion (i) fraud and (ii) error since 1997; and if he will place the results in the Library. [200453]

Mr. Pond: The available information has been placed in the Library.

Benefits

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what safeguards are in place to prevent third parties from making inappropriate withdrawals when collecting benefits from the Post Office; and if he will make a statement. [202949]

Mr. Pond: Appropriate measures are in place for each method of payment that entitles the customer to obtain their payment of benefit, pension or allowance at the Post Office. Some measures are not disclosed because to do so would reduce their effectiveness. This is in line with part 2, paragraph 4 of the Code of Practice on access to Government Information. Those that are in the public domain include:

For cheque encashment, evidence of identity is required for all cheques over £100 or where there is any reason to doubt the identity of the person presenting the cheque for payment. Where an agent acting on the customers' behalf presents a cheque for encashment, the agent must produce identification for both themselves and the payee. Suggested forms of identification are noted on the reverse of the cheque.

There is provision in the Post Office card account service for a customer to nominate a trusted friend/relative to act as a permanent agent for them for the purpose of withdrawing funds. This person would have their own card and Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access the customer's funds. To enable the customer to identify all withdrawals made by their permanent agent each transaction (including the card number used for each transaction) is shown on the payment statement issued to the customer. Only one

permanent agent is permissible for each card account customer and the customer has the option to cancel the arrangement at any time that they wish.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many known drug misusers were receiving *(a)* invalidity benefit and *(b)* disability living allowance in 2003–04. [202855]

Maria Eagle: Information is not available in the format requested.

The primary medical diagnosis for each incapacity benefits claimant is recorded. Drug abuse is included as a diagnosis; the available information is in the table. However, this only includes those whose primary diagnosis is drug abuse; it does not include those drug misusers who have other conditions as their primary diagnosis.

Information is not available for disability living allowance.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants with a primary diagnosis of drug abuse

Quarter ending	*Number*
31 May 2003	43,800
31 August 2003	45,200
30 November 2003	45,500
29 February 2004	45,700
31 May 2004	46,100

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance and incapacity benefit credits-only cases.
3. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10 Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples.

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what plans he has to change the operation of bereavement benefit to permit its payment to common law partners of deceased persons; [201712]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost of extending bereavement benefit to common law partners of deceased persons. [201713]

Mr. Pond: We have no plans to extend payment of bereavement benefits to common law partners of deceased persons, nor have we made an estimate of the cost of doing so. A founding principle of the social insurance system is that all rights to benefit derived from another person's contributions are based on the concept of legal marriage.

British Indian Ocean Territories

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received on the applicability of the habitual residence test to claims for assistance from UK citizens from the British Indian Ocean Territories; and if he will make a statement. [203132]

Mr. Pond: Within the last year, we have received no such representations, other than in the context of litigation. The habitual residence test applies to UK citizens from the British Indian Ocean Territories, as it does to other UK citizens who enter Britain for the first time from outside the common travel area (of the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland) and make an immediate claim for income-related benefits.

Carers

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will review the rules which prevent payment of carer's allowance and retirement pension at the same time. [204523]

Maria Eagle: Carer's allowance, (previously invalid care allowance), has always been subject to the overlapping benefits rules which put into effect one of the principles of the social security system that only one benefit at a time can be paid for the same purpose.

The reason why carer's allowance and state pension overlap is that they are both directed at providing a benefit for those whose circumstances typically mean that a traditional source of income is no longer available. Carer's allowance replaces income where the carer is over working age or has to give up the chance of working to look after a severely disabled person; state pension replaces income in retirement.

Although an entitlement to both benefits will mean that carer's allowance is not payable, or not payable in full, an underlying entitlement to carer's allowance gives access to the carer premium in housing benefit and council tax benefit and the additional amount for carers in state pension credit.

We continue to look at ways of helping both carers and the elderly, although we have no immediate plans to change these arrangements.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Walsall, North of 26 October, ref. POS(7)10644/0040, which was passed to the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus; and what the reasons are for the delay in a reply being sent. [204385]

Jane Kennedy: A reply was sent to my hon. Friend on 7 December. I regret the delay which was caused by an administrative error.

Council Tax Benefit

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of administering council tax benefit to *(a)* central Government and *(b)* local government in England in the latest year for which figures are available. [202289]

Mr. Pond: The amount paid by central Government to local authorities in England, for the administration of council tax benefit in 2003–04 was £188,340,000.

The net current expenditure on administering council tax benefit by local authorities in England in 2003–04 was £235,704,000.

Because the data reported by authorities do not reflect a uniform accounting standard across authorities, reported expenditure across all authorities may not be directly comparable with the grants paid.

CSA

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what calculation he has made of the effect of delays in the transfer of old cases to the new system by the Child Support Agency on progress towards the Government's poverty targets. [203084]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* Although there have been well publicised difficulties, the Child Support Agency is still collecting £280 million more in child maintenance than it did in 1997–98.

These difficulties do not affect our assessment that we are broadly on course to meet our PSA target to reduce the number of children in low income households by a quarter by 2004–05.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff working for the Child Support Agency in each year since 2001 had been working for the Agency for *(a)* more than five years, *(b)* more than two years, *(c)* more than a year and *(d)* less than a year. [203087]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Paul Goodman, dated 13 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff working for the Child Support Agency in each year since 2001 had been working for the Agency for *(a)* more than five years *(b)* more than two years *(c)* more than a year and *(d)* less than a year.

The table below provides the figures requested:

	Less than one year	*More than one year*	*More than two years*	*More than five years*
2000–01	1,342	7,845	6,753	4,742
2001–02	1,665	7,806	6,747	4,600
2002–03	1,335	8,952	7,408	4,919
2003–04	967	9,248	8,154	5,250

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make a statement on the operation of the Child Support Agency. [203847]

Mr. Pond: The Agency now collects over £280 million more in child maintenance than it did in 1997/98. In 2003/04 alone, it collected over £600 million in total.

We have acknowledged problems with the new IT. The Agency is working with EDS to resolve those problems. Work to stabilise the system is underway and this has already brought about improvements. We expect the remedial work to be complete in spring 2005.

We want people who are still on the old scheme to experience the advantages of the reforms as soon as possible. But we are determined not to repeat the mistakes of 1993 when the old scheme was brought in far too quickly.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202430]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [202433]

Mr. Pond: The energy costs incurred by the Department for Work and Pensions in the last two years are as shown in the following table.

£

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Electricity	13,869,498	15,075,730
Gas	4,764,390	4,932,292
Oil	417,694	409,999

This Department occupies approximately 1,800 buildings.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in the last two years. [202436]

Maria Eagle: There have been no refurbishments to the Department for Work and Pensions ministerial offices in the last two years.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total external spending by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202439]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not record information about the use of PFI consultants in the form requested and an answer could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202447]

Jane Kennedy: The total cost to the Department for Work and Pensions of the use of external management and IT consultants was £141.0 million in 2002–03 and £306.7 million in 2003–04.

The increased consultancy costs have principally been met from specifically allocated modernisation funds not from normal running cost allocations.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total external spending by his Department was on public-private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202449]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not record information about the use of public private partnership (PPP) consultants in the form requested and an answer could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Disabled People (Scotland)

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in Midlothian were in receipt of *(a)* disability living allowance and *(b)* attendance allowance in 2003–04; and how much was paid to them in total; [200209]

(2) how many people are in receipt of attendance allowance in the constituency of Midlothian. [200224]

Maria Eagle: In 2003–04 in the parliamentary constituency of Midlothian, around 1,600 people received attendance allowance and around 4,100 people received disability living allowance at August 2003. The total paid for both benefits was approximately £16 million pounds.

Notes.

(1) Figures based on a 5 per cent. sample of disability living allowance and attendance allowance cases and average amounts paid.

(2) The numbers of people receiving benefits is rounded to the nearest 100 and are based on figures as at August 2003. Figures for 2004–05 on the same basis are not currently available, but should be available in January 2005.

(3) The expenditure figure is rounded to the nearest £ million.

EU Directives

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [202445]

Mr. Pond: The relevant European Union directives and regulations are in the following list. Information on the cost to public funds is generally not held and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost but, where this information is available, it has been included. Departments are required to produce regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) for proposals, including those originating in European legislation, likely to impose costs on business, charities or voluntary organisations. Copies of these are available in the Library, and on departmental websites.

Health and safety provisions

Council Directive 199/45/EEC—The Dangerous Preparations Directive

Commission Directive 2000/32/EEC—26th Adaptation to Council Directive 67/548/EEC (Dangerous Substances Directive)

Commission Directive 2000/33/EEC—27th Adaptation to Council Directive 67/548/EEC (Dangerous Substances Directive)

Commission Directive 2001/58/EEC—2nd Amendment to Commission Directive 91/155/EEC (Safety Data Sheets Directive)

Commission Directive 2001/60/EEC—1st Adaptation to Council Directive 1999/45/EEC (Dangerous Preparations Directive)

The above set out a framework for the classification and labelling of dangerous chemicals to indicate hazards to people and the environment. Their purpose is to protect the environment, consumers and workers and to enable a single European Market in chemicals.

Commission Directive 2001/59/EEC—28th Adaptation to Council Directive 67/548/EEC (Dangerous Substances Directive). Introduced a less costly notification process.

Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work. Included rights to take action for breaches of obligations.

Council Directive 98/24/EC of 7 April 1998 on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work (fourteenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)

Directive 1999/92/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1999 on minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers potentially at risk from explosive atmospheres (15th individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)

Council Directive 1999/38/EC of 29 April 1999 amending for the second time Directive 90/394/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work and extending it to mutagens

Commission Directive 2002/50/EC of 6 June 2002 adapting to technical progress Council Directive 1999/36/EC on transportable pressure equipment (Text with EEA relevance)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 2032/2003 of 4 November 2003 on the second phase of the 10-year work programme referred to in Article 16(2) of Directive 98/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the placing of biocidal products on the market, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1896/2000 (Text with EEA relevance.) After 14 December 2003, only products with registered active ingredients can be placed on the market.

Regulation (EC) No 304/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 concerning the export and import of dangerous chemicals (Text with EEA relevance).

Disability provisions

Parts of Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. Some of the disability discrimination aspects of the directive fell to DWP to implement. For these aspects, costs to Government as the employer of police and prison officers newly covered by the employment duties of the Disability Discrimination Act are estimated at around £90,000 recurring and £30,000 one-off costs, and recurring costs to Government as the body responsible for the Tribunal Service are estimated at around £0.4 million in connection with an estimated increased level of complaints to tribunal.

Migrant worker provisions

Council Regulation (EC) 859/2003 of 14 May 2003 extending the provisions of Regulation (EEC) 1408/71 and Regulation (EEC) 574/72 to cover nationals of third countries who are not already covered by those provisions solely on the ground of their nationality. These regulations remove barriers to free movement of workers within the Community and provide for the coordination of member states' social security systems.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of his Department, with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200176]

Mr. Pond: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that my hon. Friend (the Minister for Europe) gave on 29 November 2004, *Official Journal*, column 10W.

Health and Safety

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to bring forward proposals to remove Crown immunity in relation to safety in the workplace, with particular reference to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; and if he will make a statement. [202242]

Jane Kennedy: The Government stand by their commitment to remove Crown immunity from statutory health and safety enforcement. We will do this as soon as a suitable legislative opportunity arises.

In the meantime the Health and Safety Executive continues to enforce health and safety requirements in Crown bodies and applies the Crown censure procedure, where, but for Crown immunity, prosecution would have been justified.

Mr. Bailey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representation there is from manufacturing industry on the Health and Safety Commission. [200227]

Jane Kennedy: Three of the members of the Health and Safety Commission were appointed following consultation with employers' organisations. Of these Ms Judith Hackitt is the Director General of the Chemical Industries Association (CIA). The CIA represents the chemical and chemistry-using industries, which includes manufacturing processes. Three members were appointed following consultation with employees' organisations. Of these Daniel Carrigan is the assistant General Secretary of trade union Amicus. Amicus represents the skilled trades in manufacturing.

Housing Benefit (Redirection)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which and what percentage of local authorities have yet to implement an agreement with the post office not to redirect housing benefit payments; and what plans he has to make such agreements mandatory for all local authorities. [200168]

Mr. Pond: Of the 408 local authorities administering housing benefit, four have yet to make contractual arrangements with the Royal Mail for the introduction of the scheme to not redirect benefit post. This is less than 1 per cent. of local authorities.

Two of these four authorities are working towards implementing the Do Not Redirect scheme; East Hertfordshire council will be implementing the scheme within the next few weeks, while North West Leicestershire district council expects to begin implementation in the new year. One authority, Ellesmere Port and Neston borough council, had previously implemented the scheme, but has since withdrawn because of concerns about the cost effectiveness of the scheme. The Council of the Isles of Scilly, which has fewer than 100 claimants, has not implemented the scheme. This too is because of cost-effectiveness issues.

Given the very small rate of non participation, we have no plans to make such agreements mandatory, but will continue to encourage the remaining authorities to participate.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of new claimants of incapacity benefit in each year since 1997 were already in receipt of another benefit; and what proportion were new benefit claimants. [203170]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

All incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance commencements each year by whether a new entrant to benefit or an existing beneficiary

Thousand and percentage

	All IB/SDA commencements	*New entrants to benefit*	*Percentage of new entrants*	*Existing beneficiaries*[1,2]	*Percentage of existing beneficiaries*
1 June 1996–31 May 1997	943.0	519.0	55.0	424.0	45.0
1 June 1997–31 May 1998	856.2	505.5	59.0	350.7	41.0
1 June 1998–31 May 1999	798.0	486.8	61.0	311.2	39.0
1 June 1999–31 May 2000	763.0	462.5	60.6	300.5	39.4
1 June 2000–31 May 2001	750.9	456.7	60.8	294.2	39.2
1 June 2001–31 May 2002	697.8	435.4	62.4	262.4	37.6
1 June 2002–31 May 2003	691.0	429.5	62.2	261.5	37.8
1 June 2003–31 May 2004	640.1	399.2	62.4	240.8	37.6

[1] Other benefits in this instance are income support (IS), jobseeker's allowance (JSA) and pension credit (PC).
[2] Figures for existing beneficiaries in receipt of other benefits are where the IB/SDA claimant has had a claim to one of those benefits cease in the 91 days prior to the IB/SDA start date or has a continuing IS/PC claim at the time of the IB/SDA commencement (excluding cases where the IB/SDA and IS/PC claims are made at the same time eg within the same week).
Notes:
1. Case load figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample, and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
3. Figures are based on persons claiming severe disablement allowance (SDA), long term or short term incapacity benefit (IB), credits only, and those persons claiming IB but who have their benefit extinguished for reasons such as an overlap with another benefit, or because of hospitalisation.
4. A person is counted only once in each year, regardless of the number of times they claim and subsequently leave each benefit.
5. SDA is not available to new claimants from 6 April 2001.
Source:
IAD Information Centre.

Industrial Injuries

Liz Blackman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will publish his response to the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council Report on prescribed disease A11. [203052]

Jane Kennedy: The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council published its report on Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome in July 2004. We have accepted the principal recommendation that the terms of prescription for prescribed disease A11 (Vibration White Finger) be extended to include sensor neural symptoms, in addition to the existing vascular symptoms.

The regulatory changes required to implement the recommendations from the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council relating to Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome are currently being worked on. It is intended that the new regulations will come into force in April 2005.

IT Systems

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the written answer of 1 December 2004 , *Official Report*, column 177W, on IT systems, what the estimated cost is of the Customer Information System; and who the supplier is. [204580]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has engaged Accenture as the Information Technology Solution Provider for the Customer Information System. Accenture has to date been awarded contracts for the design and development of the system.

The implementation date and cost of the system can be found in the Departmental Report which is available in the Library and on the Internet at:http://www.dwp.gsi.gov.uk/about dwp/dept reports.htm

Job Vacancies (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many unfilled job vacancies there are at job centres in the London borough of Wandsworth. [200307]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 13 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning unfilled vacancies in Jobcentre Plus offices within the London Borough of Wandsworth. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The figures are as follows:

Numbers of unfilled vacancies recorded at Jobcentres and Jobcentre Plus offices as on 29 October 2004

	Number
Balham Irene House	570
Battersea	1,050
Bermondsey	240
Brixton	480
Brixton Hill	540
Camberwell Green	320
Clapham Common	300
Clapham Junction	900
Kennington Park	380
London Bridge	1,680
Peckham	540
Putney	620
Stockwell	220
Streatham	910

Source:
DWP Vacancy Database, Management Information

The figures above relate to the Jobcentre/Jobcentre Plus office which has been designated as 'owning' those vacancies. However, all Jobcentre Plus vacancies are available for jobseeker's to view via JobPoints and the Internet as well as their local office.

I hope this is helpful.

Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pension credit awards have been made to couples; and in how many cases the payment has been made to *(a)* the man and *(b)* the woman. [203180]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 October, 565,485 pension credit awards had been made to couples. In 447,635 cases the claimant was male and in 117,850 cases the claimant was female.

Note:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Hendon were receiving the *(a)* guarantee and *(b)* savings element pension credit on the latest date for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [204163]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the following table.

Pension credit recipients, Hendon, 31 October 2004

	Households	*Individuals*
Pension credit total	4,085	4,855
Guarantee element only	2,120	2,565
Guarantee element and savings element	1,450	1,655
Savings element only	515	635

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.

3. Individual recipients may include a small number of partners under age 60

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library a copy of the appropriate printed output that is generated by the Pension Service Teleclaims Call Centre when a claimant does not want their retirement pension paid directly into an account, as set out in the Informed Choice script revised on 8 November. [201994]

Malcolm Wicks: Following a telephone claim for state pension, a completed claim form is sent to the customer, with a covering letter, for them to check, sign and return to the appropriate pension centre. A customer who is unable to open or manage an account is then contacted to arrange payment by cheque. An anonymous example of the letter and claim form (Form BR1(S)—'Claim for Retirement Pension') has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to ensure computerised pension and benefit payments are made over the Christmas period; and if he will make a statement. [203679]

Mr. Pond: Direct payment instructions are sent electronically in advance of a customer's due date for payment of their benefit or pension. Payments are then credited direct into the customer's nominated account on the day the customer is due to receive their benefit or pension.

For customers paid by direct payment, we are maintaining the principle that if a person's benefit or pension is due on a bank holiday, they will have access to their money in advance. Customers paid direct into a bank, building society or post office card account will have their payments made available on the previous banking working day when payment is due on a bank holiday.

As financial institutions (including post offices) will be closed on 27 and 28 December 2004 and 3 January (and 4 January in Scotland) 2005, payments due over the bank holiday periods will therefore be credited into accounts at the start of the working day on Friday 24 and Friday 31 December 2004 respectively.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will link the basic state pension to earnings. [201286]

Malcolm Wicks: Our priority is to help the poorest pensioners. In order to do so, we will be spending around £10 billion extra in 2004–05 on pensioners as a result of measures, including pension credit, introduced since 1997 and nearly 50 per cent., of the extra spending will go to the poorest pensioners.

Pension credit ensures no single pensioner will have to live on less than £105.45 per week in 2004–05, while rewarding those with modest savings. In addition to uprating the basic state pension by more than the rate of inflation in previous years, we have also introduced winter fuel payments that are worth up to £200, with an additional payment of up to £100 where there is an eligible person aged 80 or over. Free TV licences are available to people aged 75 and over and we have introduced an additional payment of £100 for this year for eligible households with someone over the age of 70. A payment of £50 will go to similar eligible households for next year.

This means that we will have given pensioners £7 billion more than an earnings link would have given them. The practical effect of our measures is that, on average, the poorest third of pensioner households are £36 per week better off.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the financial assistance fund announced on 14 May by his Department to assist workers who have lost out in pension wind-ups will be operational; and if he will make a statement. [203690]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to my written statement issued 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 65WS which announced further details on the Financial Assistance Scheme.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to improve the pension rights of women. [203848]

Malcolm Wicks: Since coming to office in 1997 we have taken significant action to improve the pensions of women and we are continuing to do so. We are tackling the legacy of past inequalities in society and the pension system through Pension Credit, lifting 1.3 million women pensioners out of absolute poverty. As the Pensions Commission recognised, "a number of recent changes in the state system will improve the future position of female pensioners". We intend to continue to make progress and have undertaken to publish a report on women and pensions next year.

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many organisations in Leeds applied to join the Pension Service Partnership Fund; and how much has been awarded to them. [203851]

Malcolm Wicks: The Pension Service Partnership Fund is a unique scheme to enhance and build on our working relationships with the Government's partners in the voluntary and community sector, including local authorities.

18 organisations operating in Leeds applied for funding from the Pension Service Partnership Fund.

I will shortly be providing the House with a written statement regarding the award of contracts from the Pension Service Partnership Fund.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, (1) how many women claiming pension credit had inadequate contributions to their National Insurance basic state pensions in the last period for which figures are available; [203982]

(2) for how many women claiming pension credit who had inadequate contributions to the National Insurance basic state pensions the shortfall was *(a)* £70-£79, *(b)* £60-£69, *(c)* £50-£59, *(d)* £40-£49, *(e)* £30-£39, *(f)* £20-£29, *(g)* £10-£19 and *(h)* 0-£9. [203984]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female pensioners drawing the basic state pension draw the (i) full and (ii) partial amount; and what the main reasons are for (A) male and (B) female pensioners drawing less than the full amount. [203983]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of *(a)* male and *(b)* female pensioners receiving the (i) full basic state pension and (ii) a basic state pension at less than the full rate as at 31 March 2004 is in the table:

	Male	*Female*
Full basic state pension	3,486,000	3,162,500
Basic state pension at less than the full rate	400,200	3,299,500

Notes:
1. Figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. A full basic state pension, £77.45 in 2003–04, is paid to those who fully satisfy the contribution conditions either in their own right or where applicable, on the basis of their late or former spouse's contributions.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample
Basic state pension is paid at less than the full rate to those who do not achieve the requisite number of qualifying years needed and to married women who are entitled on the basis of their husbands' contributions.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by what means a pensioner who receives his basic state pension payments into a bank account can begin having payments made into a different nominated account; what the target time is by which his Department aims to switch such payments to his new account; how many pensioners have requested this action in each of the last 12 months; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of these have successfully had their payments switched within (i) one week, (ii) one month, (iii) two months and (iv) three months or more of the initial request. [204581]

Malcolm Wicks: Customers who receive State Pension by direct payment can change their nominated account by providing details of the new account to The Pension Service in writing, although some are able to do so by telephone. New procedures will shortly be introduced whereby all customers can change their account details by telephone, subject to satisfactory checks as to identity. There are no targets for the time taken to change a customer's account details; guidance to staff requires that action on such changes should commence immediately and we aim to effect changes as soon as possible. Data on the numbers of changes and the time taken to effect them are not held in the form requested.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost in each of the 10 financial years from 2006–07, net of savings in means-tested benefits and additional income tax revenues, of paying from April 2006 *(a)* a basic state pension to all single people aged 75 or above at the rate of the guarantee credit for single people regardless of contribution record and *(b)* a basic state pension to all couples where one or both partners is aged 75 or above at the rate of the guarantee credit for couples, with that pension being indexed to earnings in subsequent years, and assuming that the savings credit is abolished for those aged 75 or above. [204587]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 4 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1461W.

Poverty Indicators

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what progress his Department has made in developing the new material deprivation indicator for measuring child poverty; what consultation has taken place on the development of the new material deprivation indicator; whether further consultation is planned; what research his Department has commissioned to inform the development of the new material deprivation indicator; and if he will make a statement; [201996]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the experience of using a material deprivation indicator to measure poverty in other EU countries. [201998]

Mr. Pond: During 2005 scoping work will be carried out to investigate the different methodologies that can be used to construct material deprivation measures. This will include reviewing the methods used in other countries including those in the EU. Baseline data for the material deprivation element of the child poverty measure will not be available until 2006.

The document "Measuring child poverty" sets out a number of research reports which were commissioned in order to inform the development of the material deprivation measure. These include: McKay and Collard, (2004) "Developing Family Resources Survey Questions", DWP working paper no. 13; Berthoud and Bardasi, (2004) "The dynamics of deprivation and the relationship between income and material deprivation overtime" DWP research report no. 219; and Calandrino, M., (2003) "Low income and deprivation in British Families", DWP working paper 10.

All reports have are available in the Library. We do not plan to undertake a further formal consultation on the construction of the material deprivation indicator.

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what assessment his Department has made of the distribution of poverty by *(a)* region and *(b)* housing tenure to inform the development of the new material deprivation indicator; [201997]

(2) whether his Department intends to follow the recommendation in the report The Dynamics of Deprivation to conduct further research into the relationship between material deprivation and housing tenure. [201999]

Mr. Pond: The document Households Below Average Income provides data on the household tenure of those in low income and shows that those living in local authority or housing association accommodation were more likely to live in low-income households than other tenure types. It also shows that individuals living in Inner London and the North East are more likely to live in low-income households.

The new material deprivation measure will collect data on deprivation items and has a higher 70 per cent. income threshold, and as such it will capture most families who use a large proportion of their disposable income to pay high housing costs.

This means that many families will be counted as poor for the first time because they are seen to be deprived—even if their income is above the cash poverty line. The quality of housing will be directly measured as part of material deprivation indicators, and will include housing that is poorly repaired, overcrowded or cold.

Housing is an important part of the Government's overall strategy on poverty and social exclusion. Our annual Opportunity for all report monitors the proportion of children in non-decent homes, and from this year, includes a new indicator monitoring the proportion of families with children in temporary accommodation.

We recognise the continuing interest in income after housing costs. Households Below Average Income will continue to publish results both for income before housing costs and income after housing costs. The after housing cost data will continue to be published in "Opportunity for all".

We do not plan to undertake further research on housing tenure and material deprivation.

Copies all of documents are available in the Library.

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of children who would need to be removed from material deprivation for the Government to meet its target of reducing child poverty by half by 2010–11; [202000]

(2) how the Government intends to measure progress against its child poverty target *(a)* before and *(b)* after the material deprivation indicator is announced. [202001]

Mr. Pond: Baseline data for the material deprivation element of the child poverty measure will not be available until 2006. Therefore it is not possible to anticipate how many children will need to be lifted out of poverty using the new material deprivation measure.

The technical note setting out details of how the child poverty PSA target announced in the 2004 spending review will be measured has now been published on the DWP website at www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2004/psa/tech_note_2005_2008.paf and on the HM Treasury websites. We have made a clear commitment to set a target on the new material deprivation measure in the 2006 spending review when data on material deprivation become available. All of these targets will need to be met for us to have fully realised our ambition to halve child poverty by 2010.

We will continue to report progress on the target to decrease the number of children living in relative low income by 2004–05. Final data for this target will be published in 2006.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201418]

Maria Eagle: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 the special advisers for the Department for Work and Pensions did not give any attributable interviews to newspapers, journals, books or other media in their official capacity.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201444]

Maria Eagle: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, the special advisers of the Department for Work and Pensions did not make any attributable articles or contributions to newspapers, journals, books or other media in their official capacity.

State Second Pension

Ms Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the state second pension and its impact on women. [203859]

Malcolm Wicks: For the first time we now have a system that helps more women build up a decent second pension.

State second pension provides an additional pension for low earners, including carers and disable people—the very people who were excluded from the previous (SERPS) scheme.

State second pension will lift the incomes of generations of future female pensioners. Latest data from the Family Resources shows that around 12.2 million of working age are accruing the state second pension, compared to 13.4 million men.

Timber

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans his Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [202190]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions currently has no plans to fund the establishment and maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. Timber is supplied by our Estates Partners, Land Securities Trillium, who are required to provide evidence that it is legal and sustainable. This evidence is then subject to independent audit and verification.

Vibration White Finger

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will implement the recommendations of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council in relation to vibration white finger. [201272]

Jane Kennedy: The regulatory changes required to implement the recommendations from the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council relating to Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (commonly known as Vibration White Finger) are currently being worked on. It is intended that the new regulations will come into force in April 2005.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate how many single *(a)* women and *(b)* men in 2004 will reach the age of 60 years after the qualifying week for winter fuel payment eligibility but before 25 December. [204052]

Malcolm Wicks: It is estimated that around 25,000 single women and 19,000 single men in Great Britain will reach the age of 60 after the qualifying week but before 25 December.

Notes:

1. Numbers have been calculated using the latest available 2003 Government Actuary Department Population Projections and Office for National Statistics data from the Mid-2003 Marital Status Estimates and the FM1 historical series of Live Births: Month of Occurrence for 1944–45.
2. People recorded in the Marital Status Estimates as being widowed or divorced have been included as being single.
3. People co-habiting are recorded as being single.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of people disqualified from receiving a 2004–05 winter fuel payment on the grounds that during the qualifying week they were in hospital receiving free in-patient treatment and had been receiving such treatment for more than 52 weeks; and how many of those disqualified on those grounds have been discharged from hospital since the qualifying week. [204053]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of people eligible for a 2004–05 winter fuel payment who needed to make a claim; and how many of that number have so far claimed. [204055]

Malcolm Wicks: We estimate that approximately 700,000 individuals in Great Britain reached age 60 in the qualifying period for the 2004–05 winter fuel payment. About half of these have been paid automatically but others, who are not in receipt of certain benefits, will need to make a claim.

On 3 of December, 318,215 claim forms had been received.

TREASURY

Breast Cancer

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of female breast cancer there have been in each of the last 10 years. [204400]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Charles Hendry, dated 13 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many cases of female breast cancer there have been in each of the last 10 years. [204400].

The latest year for which figures on newly diagnosed cases of cancer are available is 2001. The number of newly diagnosed cases of breast cancer in females registered in England, for the 10 years 1992–2001 are given in the table below.

Number of newly diagnosed cases of breast[1] cancer in females in England, 1992–2001

	Number of cases
1992	29,665
1993	28,618
1994	29,490
1995	29,904
1996	30,412
1997	31,380
1998	32,908
1999	34,176
2000	33,829
2001	34,347

[1] Newly diagnosed cases between 1995 and 2001, International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C50; newly diagnosed cases between 1992 and 1994, International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) code 174.

Source:

Office for National Statistics

Census

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to increase penalties for failing to complete a census form. [204035]

Mr. Timms: There are currently no plans to increase penalties for failing to complete a census form.

The penalty for failing to complete a census form is prescribed by Section 8(1) of the Census Act 1920 which states that on summary conviction a person shall be liable for a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

The maximum fine of level 3 on the standard scale under the Criminal Justice Act 1982 was £1,000 at the time of the 2001 Census.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years, giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202504]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in his Department in each of the past two years. [202488]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is as follows:

HM Treasury

HMT have not commissioned any new builds, demolition and rebuilds or any such works as part of PFI projects for the last two years. Work on the offices occupied by the Treasury was completed in July 2002.

Inland Revenue, HM Customs and Excise and Valuation Office Agency

IR, HM C&E and VOA have not commissioned any new builds, demolition and rebuilds directly. The departments have eight estates PFIs—an extension to the Newcastle Estate Development PFI, four new buildings, a restaurant and car park were all commissioned in October 2002. The Inland Revenue will occupy two and half of these buildings. The total cost of this work was £45 million, the Department's share being approximately £28 million. This will be paid over 25 years through a contract facility price.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the past two years. [202492]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is as follows:

HM Treasury

HMT have not carried out any building refurbishments in the past two years. Work on the offices occupied by the Treasury was completed July 2004.

Inland Revenue, HM Customs and Excise and Valuation Office Agency

In April 2001 the majority of buildings owned or occupied by IR, HM Customs and Excise and VOA were sold and transferred to Mapeley as part of the STEPS PFI Contract. Refurbishment work is carried out as part of this contract, some included within lifecycle works which are the responsibility of Mapeley and not relevant to this question, and the rest as work commissioned over and above lifecycle by the departments. The departments do not at this time have the data required to answer this question and could do so only at disproportionate cost. Outside of the STEPS Contract the departments have seven other PFIs. The refurbishment for Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise's move to Government Offices Great George Street (GOGGS) has a total capital cost of £182 million including construction, and Exchequer Partnership funding and project costs. The cost to the departments is £17.1 million per annum at March 2002 prices over 33 years.

Email

Mr. Maude: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for all announcements and publications issued by his Department and those public bodies reporting to him. [203681]

Mr. Timms: The Government Actuary's Department and HM Treasury offer website users the opportunity to subscribe to mailing lists giving notification of news releases about those announcements and publications thought to be of particular interest. National Savings and Investments and the Office for National Statistics intend to introduce e-mail notification next year.

HM Customs and Excise offers website users customised e-mail alerts and a document tracking tool that allows users to receive alerts when specific content changes. Media contacts can subscribe to an email list of news releases issued on behalf of Government Departments on the Government News Network website, the system used by Inland Revenue to send email newswire alerts.

The Valuation Office Agency, the Royal Mint and the Office of Government Commerce do not currently use automatic e-mail notification, but continue to keep their means of communication with the public under review.

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list his official engagements over the past six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202391]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Minister's public engagements.

EU Accounting Practices

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in

his Department have had with Marta Andreasen on accounting practices in the EU during the last year. [204165]

Mr. Timms: None.

EU Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of EU funding to the European Parties Elections and Referendums Network was in the last year for which figures are available. [204068]

Mr. Timms: The European Parties Elections and Referendums Network is coordinated by the University of Sussex's European Institute which has been designated a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. Budget line 15 02 01 01 provides support for Jean Monnet Centres for Excellence—among other activities—and had total outturn of €3.1 million (£2.2 million[1]) in 2003. We do not have a breakdown of funding by recipient.

[1] Converted at the average annual rate for 2003 of £1 = €1.4320

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will place in the Library a list of UK-based NGOs which received funding from the European Union in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* project and *(b)* budget line used; [204070]

(2) if he will list UK think tanks which received support from the European Union budget in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* location and *(b)* funding received; and if he will make a statement. [204075]

Mr. Timms: The European Union directly supports the running costs of NGOs and think tanks through a number of budget lines. The outturns for these budget lines in 2003 is given in the following table (we do not have a breakdown by recipient or project).

Budget line Number	*Title*	*2003 outturn*	
			€000[1]
04 05 03	Women's organisations	277	193
15 02 01 06	Study and research centre	1,336	933
15 04 01 03	Subsidy for cultural organisations advancing the idea of Europe	4,223	2,949
15 06 01 01	Measures in favour of civil society	2,805	1,959
15 06 01 03	Grants to European think tanks and organisations advancing the idea of Europe	2,014	1,406
15 06 01 04	Associations and federations of European interest	1,250	873
15 06 01 05	European think tanks	398	278
15 07 01 02	Support for international nongovernmental youth organisations	1,700	1,187
19 02 02	Institutes specialising in relations between the European Union and third countries	1,353	945

[1] Converted at the average annual rate for 2003 of £1 = €1.4320

UK-based think tanks and NGOs are eligible for funding from all of the budget lines above. Organisations seeking funding from these budget lines submit their bids directly to the Commission and are not required to send copies to member state governments.

NGOs may also apply for grants from other EU expenditure programmes to undertake specific projects. Bids for EU grants are submitted directly to the Commission and there is no requirement that copies of the bids are sent to member state governments.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a break down of expenditure incurred in the last EU financial year available for budget lines *(a)* 3701 and *(b)* 3710; and if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on continued funding of these lines. [204074]

Mr. Timms: In 2003 the outturn for budget line 3701 was €37.7 million (£26.3 million[1]). No payments were made under budget line 3710 in 2003. Both lines are contained in the European Parliament's administration budget and set on an annual basis by the European Parliament itself.

[1] Converted at the average annual rate for 2003 of £1 = €1.4320

Productivity

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Office for National Statistics and *(b)* the Department of Trade and Industry in relation to the calculation of the Treasury's measurement of an underlying trend rate of productivity growth on an output per hour worked basis. [204409]

Mr. Timms: In assessing the underlying trend rate of productivity growth, on an output per hour worked basis, the Treasury uses data sourced from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on real non-oil output (Gross Value Added) and total actual weekly hours worked (from the Labour Force Survey). The Treasury shares a joint Public Service Agreement Target with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on increasing the productivity of the economy. So Treasury officials have regular discussions with ONS officials on data issues and with DTI officials on measuring progress on the joint target. The latest numbers are available in Table A2 of the 2004 pre-Budget report (p. 169).

Retirement Age

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many single *(a)* women and *(b)* men will reach the age of 60 years between 26 September and 25 December. [204054]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 13 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the number of single women and single men who will reach the age of 60 between 26 September and 25 December. I am replying in his absence. (204054)

It is estimated that there will be 25 thousand 'single' women and 19 thousand 'single' men who will reach the age of 60 between these dates in 2004 in Great Britain. For these purposes we have interpreted 'single' to mean not-married. This includes people whose legal marital status is single (never married), widowed, and divorced.

These figures are estimates. They are based on the latest available, 2003 based national population projections for 2004 produced by the Government Actuary's Department, and allowing for an estimate of the expected number of deaths. The pattern of births in 1944/1945 has been used to give an estimate for the dates shown. Finally, the 2003 marital status estimates have been used to give an estimate of the number who are 'single' i.e. not-married.

Tax Credits

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of overpayment for child and working tax credit there have been in Coventry. [203584]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of those eligible who do not claim the child care element of the working tax credit; what average amount they are estimated to lose; and what the estimated saving to the Exchequer of failure to claim was in the last period for which figures are available. [204167]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Mid Dorset and North Poole (Mrs. Brooke) on 9 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 473W.

At July 2004, 340,000 families were benefiting from the child care element of the working tax credit, nearly 90 per cent. higher than the number benefiting under the working families' and disabled person's tax credits and seven times the number benefiting under family credit.

US Treasury Bonds

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value was of US Treasury bonds held by *(a)* the Bank of England, *(b)* the UK Government, *(c)* UK Reserves and *(d)* UK banks, expressed in (i) US dollars and (ii) pounds sterling (A) in January 2003, (B) in January 2004 and (C) on the latest date for which figures are available. [204064]

Mr. Timms: Details of the United Kingdom Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity Template are published monthly on the Bank of England's website, meeting the International Monetary Fund's "Special Data Dissemination Standard". This includes a breakdown of reserve assets, however, data to the level of disaggregation asked for is considered to be market sensitive and is therefore not publicly available.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Cross-examination

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, (1) what his assessment is of the powers of a judge to prevent a party to family proceedings against whom there is an allegation of *(a)* domestic violence and *(b)* sexual abuse from cross-examining the other party about such allegations; [203999]

(2) what plans he has to prevent any party in a family case who faces an allegation of domestic violence or sexual abuse from cross-examining the other party. [204000]

Mr. Leslie: I believe that the wide discretion afforded to judges in hearing family proceedings gives them sufficient powers to ensure that victims can be protected from intrusive and unfair questioning by the defendant in family proceedings. Judges that are ticketed to hear family cases will have undergone training. They can offer assistance in how questions are framed and how evidence is presented. The judge also has an inherent power to admit evidence at the trial if he considers that it is in the interests of justice to do so.

Under Order 20, rule 8 of the County Court Rules 1981 and Order 38, rule 3 of the Rules of the Supreme Court 1965, the court may, at or before the hearing of any action, order that evidence of any particular fact shall be given at the trial in such manner as may be specified by the order. This would allow the court to use special measures type facilities such as screens and TV links where they are available. A letter to county courts will be sent shortly to remind them of the need to make known to victims any special facilities that are available in the court and a poster will be provided to raise awareness of these Facilities. victims any special facilities that are available in the court and a poster will be provided to raise awareness of these Facilities.

Energy Disconnections

Mr. Pope: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many applications for warrants for energy disconnection under the Rights of Entry (Gas and Electricity Boards) Act 1954, as amended, were *(a)* granted, *(b)* refused and *(c)* verified by magistrates courts in England and Wales in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004; [204116]

(2) how many applications for energy disconnection under the Rights of Entry (Gas and Electricity Boards) Act 1954, as amended, were granted by each magistrates court in England and Wales in each of the last three years. [204117]

Mr. Leslie: Completed cases information is provided by magistrates courts to my Department but it is not provided in sufficient detail to identify cases that resulted from specific legislation. To obtain this information from the individual magistrates courthouses could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) does collect pertinent data for England, Wales and Scotland and they are provided in the following table. It should be

noted that disconnection is a last resort and that in particular, vulnerable customers are offered alternative means of payment.

	Number of customers disconnected on a warrant visit	*Number of prepayment meters installed on a warrant visit*
Electricity		
2002	818	18,210
2003	1,377	16,857
January-September 2004	565	14,064
Gas		
2002	21,633	18,093
2003	15,836	13,202
January-September 2004	1,984	6,763

Mr. Pope: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance is given to magistrates on ensuring that each warrant application for energy disconnection made under the Rights of Entry (Gas and Electricity Boards) Act 1954, as amended, receives a rigorous and consistent verification; and if he will make a statement. [204118]

Mr. Leslie: The responsibility for training magistrates, and the legal advisers who advise them, currently rests with the 42 Magistrates Courts' Committees (MCC)s. Each MCC has its own procedures and advice to applicants, magistrates and legal advisers for dealing with such applications. These may vary between areas, but all will require applications to be made in the courthouse, and either in the presence of a legal adviser, or with a legal adviser in attendance to give advice if required.

The Judicial Studies Board advises nationally on training for magistrates. Although the JSB has given no direct guidance or advice on right of entry or disconnection warrants, it did include applications for these warrants as part of its training material on the Human Rights Act. The exercise dealt with issues of "fair trial" and "proportionality". It is likely that as a result of that MCCs reviewed their procedures to ensure that they complied with the Human Rights Act.

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202392]

Mr. Lammy: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's official spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers public engagements.

Family Courts

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will extend special measures into the family courts in cases in which quasi-criminal allegations of domestic violence and sexual abuse are a part of the case. [204039]

Mr. Leslie: It is the case that the main witness, usually the victim, is already known to the alleged perpetrator in family proceedings cases. Further, cases are not heard or decided by juries but by family judges. Judges that are ticketed to hear family cases will have undergone training to deal with domestic and sexual abuse cases sensitively. It is the attitude and understanding of the judge toward the victim in family proceedings that is as important as any special measures that may be available.

Judges in the family courts already have wide powers when hearing cases where they decide a victim is vulnerable or scared, for instance victims of domestic or sexual abuse, to take action to assist them to give evidence. Hearings are usually heard in private and wigs and gowns are not worn. If the judge decides it is necessary, and they are available, screens and video links can be used. We are also looking to develop integrated domestic violence courts where civil and criminal aspects of domestic violence cases will be heard in one court. This should also make the availability of special measures more readily available across the jurisdictions. A letter to county courts will be sent shortly to remind them of the need to make known to victims any special facilities that are available in the court and a poster will be provided to aid awareness of these facilities.

IT Contracts

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, how much the Department has spent on its Programme on IT and e-Government in each year since 1997; and how the money has been apportioned between different initiatives. (201476)

Mr. Leslie: For my Department, expenditure incurred on IT between 1997 and 2004 covered three main areas; Crown and County Courts, magistrates' courts and Headquarters. These three areas are covered by separate contracts, namely Local Office Court Computer Systems—various court-based IT systems (LOCCS), Magistrates' courts IT systems (LIBRA) and Resource Accounting and Management Information System (ARAMIS). The e-Government Unit lists 35 eGovernment initiatives under the Department for Constitutional Affairs in its Electronic Service Delivery Report for January 2004. Most of the significant expenditure on these initiatives is contained in the figures below, but to provide information on the money spent on each of them for each of the last seven years would incur disproportionate cost.

The LOCCS contract was awarded to EDS in September 1996, to provide IT systems to courts. Between 1997 and 2004, expenditure on this contract totalled £137.53 million. The expenditure for each year is as follows.

	(£ million)
1998/99	5.92
1999/00	14.35
2000/01	24.9
2001/02	33.4
2002/03	17.5
2003/04	41.46

ARAMIS is a PFI contract for the provision of accounting, financial, HR/payroll and management information services. Since 1997 to date, expenditure has totalled 121.25m. The expenditure for each year is as follows:

	(£ million)
1997–98:	3.07
1998–99:	13.54
1999–2000:	14.47
2000–01:	18.5
2001–02:	18.39
2002–03:	24.74
2003–04:	28.54

The LIBRA contract provides case management and Office Automation to Magistrates' courts). Total expenditure since 2000 (when payments commenced) to date is £180.8 million. The expenditure for each year is as follows:

	(£ million)
2000–01	11.2
2001–02	22
2002–03	68
2003–04	79.6

Judges

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* Queen's Bench and *(b)* Family Division judges there are; how many there were in (i) 1974, (ii) 1984 and (iii) 1994; and what the percentage change was in each case. [203939]

Mr. Leslie: As at 9 December 2004 there are:

73 Queen's Bench Division—(72 High Court Judges and the Lord Chief Justice)

19 Family Division—(18 High Court Judges and the President of the Family Division)

1974

44 Queen's Bench Division—(43 High Court judges and the Lord Chief Justice)

17 Family Division—(16 High Court Judges and the President)

1984

50 Queen's Bench Division—(49 High Court judges and the Lord Chief Justice)

17 Family Division—(16 High Court Judges and the President)

1994

64 Queen's Bench Division—(63 High Court judges and the Lord Chief Justice)

16 Family Division—(15 High Court Judges and the President)

The percentage changes were:

Queen's Bench Division

1974–84 = 13 per cent. increase

1984–94 = 28 per cent. increase

1994–2004 = 14 per cent. increase.

Family Division

1974–84 = no change

1984–94 = 6 per cent. decrease

1994–2004 = 16 per cent. increase.

Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much his Department has spent on acquiring shredding equipment for office use in each year since 1997. [202102]

Mr. Leslie: The amount spent on acquiring shredding equipment for office use for each year since 1997 is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff hours have been spent shredding documents in each month since January. [202103]

Mr. Leslie: Information on staff hours spent disposing of records identified for destruction is not held, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, if he will list the attributable interviews that the Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201426]

Mr. Leslie: Special Advisers in my Department did not give any attributable interviews to newspapers, journals, books or any other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. All Special Advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that the Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201451]

Mr. Leslie: Special advisers in the Department for Constitutional Affairs did not make any contributions to newspapers, journals, books and other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct of Special Advisers".

Witnesses (Criminal Courts)

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Department has taken to publicise the availability of special measures for witnesses in the criminal courts. [203874]

Mr. Leslie: My Department works closely with the other Criminal Justice Departments to ensure that the availability of special measures is publicised.

Prior to attending court the Witness in Court leaflet should be sent to every prosecution witnesses, with the witness warning letter. This leaflet includes information about the availability of special measures. The Witness Walkthrough of CJS Online also has information about special measures. In addition, Home Office circulars provide information to practitioners about special measures. Technical guidance has also been issued to the judiciary as to the way the legislation should operate on special measures and the Judicial Studies Board provides training seminars for the judiciary in which special measures are covered extensively. In each Crown court centre there is a Witness Liaison Officer, who has received training for dealing with vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and the use of special measures. It is planned to extend the use of Witness Liaison Officers to all magistrates courts by spring 2005.

The 'No Witness, No Justice' programme, which is currently being rolled out nationally, introduces dedicated Witness Care Units bringing police and the CPS together for the first time to jointly meet the individual needs of victims and witnesses. They provide a range of services, including, following charge, an initial needs assessment to identify those witnesses who would qualify for special measures, and continuous review of victim and witness needs throughout the case.

My Department has also worked with the General Council of the Bar, the NSPCC and other criminal justice agencies to produce a video "A Case for Special Measures" which is aimed primarily at the legal professions.

WALES

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203496]

Mr. Hain: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204295]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204315]

Mr. Hain: The Wales office was established on 1 July 1999.

Since then, departmental special advisers have made no such appearances.

Staff Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200330]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office was created in July 1999 and has 57 staff.

(a) In-house training was provided by the National Assembly for Wales under a Service Level Agreement until June 2003 and is now provided by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. There is no cost to the Wales Office for such training except for travel and subsistence for trainers. The costs for travel and subsistence are nil for years 1999–2000, 2000–01 and 2001–02. In 2002–03 we spent £1,856 and in 2003–04 £2,230.

(b) and *(c)* Courses arranged specifically for Wales Office staff are normally held in our buildings in London and Cardiff and have included:

Course	*Date*
Performance Awareness	April 2002
Equality Awareness	July and August 2002
Pension Choices	September 2002
Evidencing Competences	December 2002
Records Management/Data Protection	January 2003
Selection Interviewing	February and April 2003
Performance Management	February and March 2003
Freedom of Information	April 2003
Reward and Recognition Scheme	May 2003
DCA Induction	September 2003
Away Day Training Event	February 2004
Health and Safety	March 2004

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200402]

Mr. Touhig: None.

Taskforces

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204714]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Since then no taskforces or similar bodies have been set up by my Department.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers and officials in his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost to his Department of such telephones has been in each year since 1997; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202167]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 0295W to the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Prisk).

Currently, the Wales Office provides two mobile phones for Ministers and Special Advisers, and 17 for officials.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Burma

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value of British imports from Burma was in each year since 1995. [202805]

Mr. Alexander: According to figures published by HM Customs and Excise, the UK's imports of goods from Burma were as follows:

UK imports of goods from Burma 1995–2003

	£ million
1995	9.3
1996	13.7
1997	19.5
1998	17.3
1999	23.8
2000	49.3
2001	66.6
2002	64.3
2003	62.2

Source:
H M Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS A)

Business Support

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support is planned from her Department for small and medium-sized enterprises over the next five years for developing international export markets. [201317]

Mr. Alexander: Details of the future activity planned to support small and medium-sized enterprises developing their international business is set out in UK Trade and Investment's Corporate Plan available at www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk. The strategy is currently being revised to take account of the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review, including an increased emphasis on new to export firms.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support from her Department is available to small and medium-sized enterprises who wish to attend international trade shows in other countries. [201319]

Mr. Alexander: Small and medium-sized enterprises can currently apply for financial support when they join UK groups at overseas trade fairs as part of a programme that UK Trade and Investment agrees annually with accredited trade associations and chambers of commerce. Grant assistance is also made available to individual SMEs wishing to attend trade fairs that are not part of the annual programme. SMEs on the Passport to Export Success process are entitled to matched funding in the form of Business Development Credits (BDCs), which may include 50 per cent. of the costs for the first participation in a fair or exhibition.

A range of factors is taken into account when determining both the eligibility of individual firms, and the amount of financial support that UK Trade and Investment will provide up to a pre-determined limit.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total *(a)* allocation to and *(b)* expenditure on (i) Small Firms Loan Guarantee, (ii) Grant for Research and Development, (iii) Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea and (iv) Knowledge Transfer Partnerships has been since April 2003. [202521]

Nigel Griffiths: The information requested is as follows:

(i) The Small Firms Loan Guarantee does not have an allocation, it is a demand led scheme and therefore the budget is open ended.

The expenditure for 2003–04 was £40.19 million and expenditure to the end of November 2004 is £27.1 million.

(ii) The provision for SMART/Grant for Research and Development for 2003–04 was £27 million and expenditure £47 million. The allocation for 2004–05 is £27 million and expenditure to the end of November 2004 is £30.4 million.

(iii) The allocation for the Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea was £2 million (£1 million in both 2003–04 and 2004–05) and the value of grants offered since launch was £2.056 million.

(iv) The amount allocated during 2003–04 to be expended over the next four financial years on Knowledge Transfer Partnership is £13,906,499.

The amount spent in promoting and managing and delivering these KTP projects in this period was £586,000.

Cancer Patients

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to change the employment rights of cancer patients. [203650]

Maria Eagle: I have been asked to reply.

Subject to parliamentary approval of the Disability Discrimination Bill, a person who has cancer will be treated as a disabled person, for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, from the point at which they are diagnosed with this condition. We are proposing that this additional protection will only extend to people who have cancer which requires substantial treatment, in line with the recommendations of the Disability Rights Task Force. This will be the subject of consultation in the near future. This extends protection from the current arrangements where a cancer must already have or have had an adverse effect and be likely to progress to have a substantial adverse effect before protection against discrimination is available.

Child Labour

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to ensure the responsible behaviour of UK companies investing in the developing world; and what action she is taking in respect of those companies that use child labour. [201821]

Mr. Alexander: Across Government we are undertaking a range of activities to encourage UK companies to maximise the positive contribution they make and minimise their adverse impacts on economic, environmental and social objectives throughout their operations across the world, including action to tackle the use of child labour. This encompasses the approaches set out in the recent Trade and Environment White Paper as well as encouraging the highest standards of corporate behaviour through adherence to the values and behaviours set out in internationally agreed initiatives such as the OECD guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. We also encourage participation in initiatives such as the Ethical Trading Initiative, Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, Kimberley Certification Process, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the UN Global Compact. Further details can be found on www.csr.gov.uk.

Civil Partnership Bill (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many letters have been received by her Department since 5 March opposing the implementation of the Civil Partnership Bill in Northern Ireland. [202748]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Since 5 March 2004, the Department of Trade and Industry has received 260 letters opposing the implementation of the Civil Partnership Act in Northern Ireland.

Over the same period the Department has received 405 letters in support of the implementation of civil partnerships in Northern Ireland.

Coalminers' Compensation Scheme

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average full and final settlement is for cases submitted by *(a)* Beresfords solicitors, *(b)* AMS Law solicitors, *(c)* the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, *(d)* Mark Gilbert Morse solicitors, *(e)* Towells solicitors, *(f)* Irwin Mitchell solicitors, *(g)* Thompsons solicitors, *(h)* Richmonds solicitors and *(i)* Frank Allen Pennington solicitors for vibration white finger and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease under the coalminers' compensation scheme; and what the average full and final settlement under the scheme is. [202698]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* As of 21 November 2004 the figures are:

Solicitor	*COPD Average settlement*	*VWF Average settlement**
Beresfords Solicitors	2,425	7,352
AMS Law	3,780	8,342
Union of Democratic Mineworkers	4,375	8,391
Mark Gilbert Morse	6,242	6,549
Towells Solicitors	8,782	8,632
Irwin Mitchell	10,472	9,202
Thompsons	10,195	9,778
Richmonds Solicitors	4,776	11,352
Frank Allen Pennington NB	5,301	8,001

Note:
Average settlement is total damages paid on claims settled by payment and excludes denied/withdrawn claims.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she has taken to recover costs from solicitors under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme where conditional fee agreements have been invalidated. [203838]

Nigel Griffiths: The respiratory disease Claims Handling Agreement (CHA), in accordance with the High Court judgment, makes detailed provision for the payment of costs to claimants' solicitors. The Department believes that the CHA provides for adequate remuneration for solicitors and that no additional payments are therefore justified.

The CHA does not allow for the payment of a success fee under a conditional fee agreement by the Department and as such we do not and have not made any such payments.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases have been submitted by Donne Mileham and Haddock solicitors under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme. [203839]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department's claim handlers, IRISC, have not received any claims under the British Coal health schemes from Donne Mileham and Haddock solicitors.

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she will take to assist former miners who worked with private mining companies as well as British Coal to have their compensation cases settled. [200198]

Nigel Griffiths: We have now made compensation payment to miners who spend all or part of their working lives in private mines. The DTI continues to press the owners of small mines to make payments as quickly as possible.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average transaction cost is for a settled chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and vibration white finger claim, broken down by *(a)* legal, *(b)* medical, *(c)* insurance and *(d)* other costs. [202841]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The average cost for settling a respiratory disease claim is approximately £1,300 and for a vibration white finger (VWF) general damage claim approximately £1,040.

For a respiratory disease claim over half is accounted for by medical assessments and around a third to contractors. For a VWF claims around three quarters is accounted for by contractors/legal costs and around a sixth for medical assessments.

Conflict Zones (OECD Study)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations her Department has had with *(a)* other Government Departments and *(b)* other stakeholders in relation to the December 2004 consultation meeting for the OECD study, Doing Business in Conflict Zones; what the result of the consultation was; and if she will make a statement. [202196]

Mr. Alexander: UK input to the OECD Investment Committee's discussion on "Conducting business with integrity in Weak governance zones: Issues for discussion and a case study of the DRC" will be informed by discussion between DTI, FCO and DfID. These discussions are on-going.

Other stakeholders will have the opportunity to put their views directly to the Investment Committee at a discussion with high level non-governmental experts on 15 December.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, when she will reply to the letter for the honourable Member for Walsall North of 20 October, regarding a factory closure; and for what reasons no acknowledgement was sent at the time. [199602]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: I apologise for the delay in responding to your letter.

The letter in question was signed and sent to yourself on the 7 December 2004.

Electricity Pylons

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the compulsory purchase of land to construct electricity pylons. [203658]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As with other utility companies performing a public service role, Parliament has given electricity companies access to compulsory powers where voluntary agreement cannot be obtained. Exercise of such powers is subject to a statutory process where ultimately confirmation or refusal of application is given by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry or officials acting on her behalf.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the company *(a)* constructing, *(b)* that owns and *(c)* that operates an electricity pylon is permitted to make a financial profit from land that is acquired under a compulsory purchase order to construct an electricity pylon. [203659]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The sale of compulsorily acquired land is a matter for the electricity company. I understand that they would normally apply the Crichel Down Rules. These non-statutory rules, which apply to surplus land compulsorily purchased by the Government, allow for the offer of such land at its current market value to former owners, by way of a first opportunity to repurchase.

Energy Market Liberalisation

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects liberalisation of energy markets in other EU countries to be achieved. [203109]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The 2003 Electricity (2003/54/EC) and Gas (2003/55/EC) Directives establish a framework for the development of the internal energy market, with an implementation date of 1 July this year. These are complemented by the 2003 Electricity Regulation (EC1228) and the proposed Gas Regulation (COM (2003) 741), currently before the European Parliament, which both seek to harmonise the conditions of cross-border trade.

It is for the Commission to ensure compliance with EU legislation.

The Commission produces annual benchmarking reports on the development of competition in individual member states. The third report, of March this year, is available on the Commission website at http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/gas/benchmarking/doc3/3rd_benchmarking_report_en.pdf.

A fourth report is due to be published soon.

Energy Security Conference

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what contribution *(a)* departmental staff and *(b)* staff of executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies responsible to her Department made to the conference on energy security held at the Royal United Services Institute on 3 to 4 November 2004; and if she will place papers prepared by her Department for the conference in the Library. [202754]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Three officials from the Department gave presentations to the conference, on: 'Nuclear safety, security and emergency planning'; 'Downstream oil resilience' and 'The role of energy security in Government energy policy'. I have arranged for the slides they presented to be placed in the Libraries of the House. I also spoke at the conference. A copy of my speech is on the DTI website.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate her Department has made of the likely change in the number of households in fuel poverty as a result of increased fuel prices. [201645]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Our analysis of the effects of increased fuel price rises suggests that fuel poverty is likely to rise by a limited amount in 2004 and 2005 (perhaps by up to 200,000 vulnerable households in England. However any potential increase in the numbers needs to be set against the very real progress that has been made: the number of households in fuel poverty in the UK has fallen by over 3 million since 1996, to 2.25 million in 2002 and further reductions are expected for 2003. The effects of the recent price increases will also be countered by other measures that we have put in place on incomes and benefits. The assumptions behind this estimate are set out in two DTI publications which accompanied publication of the "Fuel Poverty in England: The Government's Plan for Action" on 30 November. These internet publications are available to view at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/index.shtml.

The Government remain committed to achieving their target of seeking an end to the problem of fuel poverty in England in vulnerable households by 2010 as far as is reasonably possible.

Gas Prices

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she has held discussions with representatives of industry about the October price spike in forward wholesale gas prices; if she will assess price trends in the market since liberalisation; and if she will make a statement. [203107]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have had meetings with two major chemical companies on this issue and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met representatives on the Energy Intensive Users Group on 9 December. Officials are having on-going discussions with industry representatives to share information and assessments, and to hear their proposals for what might be done.

Gas prices are continuously monitored by Ofgem and my Department, and my Department publishes regular updates in the Quarterly Energy Prices Publication. Over the long run our policies of market liberalisation and non-intervention have delivered low gas prices and increased choice for domestic and industrial consumers, and even now domestic prices are only just returning to the levels they were at in 1997, and industrial gas prices are still likely to be below the average over the last 30 years.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is taking to protect the UK's industrial competitiveness from the effects of rising wholesale gas prices. [203108]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department is seeking to maximise the recovery of gas from the UK continental shelf though a number of initiatives, such as the fallow blocks exercise, the new licence approach and the initiative on mature fields.

The Government are also facilitating the huge programme of private sector investment in the UK's gas supply infrastructure, including import projects such as the doubling of the Bacton-Zeebrugge Interconnector import capacity, a new interconnector from the Netherlands, the new Norwegian (Langeled) pipeline and three major new LNG import terminals.

On the EU front, we and Ofgem are pressing the European Commission to launch a sectoral investigation into any European gas suppliers who may have acted anti-competitively. We are also continuing to press the European Commission hard for timely liberalisation of energy markets across the EU.

LNG Plant (Nigeria)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Export Credits Guarantee Department has taken since October 2003 to ascertain whether NW Kellogg or other subsidiary of Halliburton was implicated in *(a)* the French investigation and *(b)* the US investigations into allegations of bribery in connection with the LNG Plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria. [202900]

Mr. Alexander: ECGD is not a law enforcement agency and has no investigatory powers. Despite having made a request for details of the French investigation, ECGD has been denied information by the French investigator but has been informed by Halliburton that it is not currently being examined by either of the investigations. We await the conclusion of the investigations in question.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which company signed the no-bribery warranty for the application for the Export Credits Guarantee Department support for a contract on the LNG Plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria. [202901]

Mr. Alexander: M. W. Kellogg Limited and Bonny Project Management Company Limited.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the contract supported by the Export Credits Guarantee Department in connection with the LNG plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria was. [202925]

Mr. Alexander: Goods and services (including project management services) required for the construction of two new gas liquefaction units, and ancillary facilities, at an already existing LNG plant.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will place in the Library a copy of the recourse agreement and related documents signed in connection with Export Credits Guarantee Department support for a contract on the LNG plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria. [202926]

Mr. Alexander: No. These documents represent contractual agreements between ECGD and the parties concerned and are therefore, commercially confidential.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which companies signed the recourse agreement for the contract supported by the Export Credits Guarantee Department in connection with the LNG plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria. [202927]

Mr. Alexander: These documents represent contractual agreements between ECGD and the parties concerned and are, therefore, commercially confidential.

Northern Cyprus

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on direct UK trade links with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. [201333]

Mr. Alexander: The Government strongly support EU efforts to enable preferential direct trade with northern Cyprus. At the April General Affairs Council, EU Foreign Ministers committed to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. At the Council's request, the Commission produced a draft regulation to deliver on this commitment and enable preferential direct trade between the north and EU member states on a tariff quota system. This regulation, along with a regulation disbursing 259 million euros of aid to northern Cyprus, has yet to be agreed. The Government strongly support the presidency in their determination to agree these regulations and to fulfil the Council mandate to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, if she will make a statement on the European Commission's investigation into the funding of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [203071]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The European Commission have announced a formal investigation into the aid to the NDA that we notified in December 2003. The UK Government fully supports the EC State aid regime, understands the Commission's desire to investigate and will work closely with them throughout their investigation.

I also welcome the Commission's acknowledgement, in their press notice of 1 December 2004 announcing the opening of their investigation, that the transitional arrangements under which the NDA will start work on 1 April 2005 do not involve state aid. As part of these arrangements I have today issued a written statement under the Energy Act 2004 of my policy for crediting the Nuclear Decommissioning Funding Account.

Oil and Gas Supplies

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what percentage of the UK's *(a)* oil and *(b)* gas supplies reached the UK via transit routes that pass through Ukraine in the last period for which figures are available. [204379]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: It is not possible to determine what percentage of UK physical oil and gas supplied has transited through Ukraine although it is believed to be negligible. Most UK oil and gas supplies are produced indigenously with imports primarily sourced from Norway (for crude oil and gas) and Northern Europe (for oil products).

Regional Venture Capital Funds

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the projected allocation for regional venture capital funds is for *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07. [204176]

Nigel Griffiths: The DTI/SBS's projected allocation for the Regional Venture Capital Funds (RVCFs) is:

	£ million
(a) 2004–05	29
(b) 2005–06	10
(c) 2006–07	5

The DTI/SBS anticipates that the total DTI/SBS commitment of up to £74 million will be invested by 2007.

UK Trade and Industry

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what estimate she has made of the amount of export revenue created for small and medium-sized enterprises since 1997 by the activities of UK Trade and Industry. [201318]

Mr. Alexander: UK Trade and Investment assists small and medium-sized companies to build their export capacity. The value of such assistance is measured through the percentage of firms improving their business performance rather than the value of exports generated. As published in UK Trade and Investment's recent Resource Accounts, the Autumn Performance report shows that during 2003, 35 per cent. of new-to-export firms and 43 per cent. of established exporters assisted by UK Trade and Investment improved their business performance.

UK Trade and Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the export trade funding received by UK Trade and Investment was handed over to the regional development agencies in the last period for which figures are available; and whether this amount is forecast to change. [203952]

Mr. Alexander: Export trade funding is not handed over to the regional development agencies (RDAs). UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) acts as the international trade arm of the RDAs. UKTIs international trade directors manage UKTI funding in each of the nine English regions, working in close partnership with RDAs to implement regional international trade strategies.

Wind Power

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to encourage the use of photovoltaics as an alternative to wind power. [203552]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 475W to my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, East, Nairn and Lochaber (Mr. Stewart).

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what part her Department played in the recent European Wind Energy Conference and Exhibition. [203553]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As with previous European Wind Energy Association Conferences the host nation's Government Department with responsibility for renewables part sponsored the event. The DTI committed €150.000 in sponsorship for the event, was involved in the organising committee and had a stand in the conference exhibition giving information on our support for the renewables industry.

I attended the conference, gave a speech and toured the UK stands and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave the opening address. I later attended the dinner and gave a speech there.

The event was very successful attracting 1,500 participants and 260 exhibiting companies including many from the UK.

The event provided an excellent opportunity for UK businesses to showcase their expertise and capabilities and for the regions/regional development agencies to engage with firms looking to make investments in the UK.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Accused Persons (Former Yugoslavia)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has with the NATO authorities and others to make renewed attempts to capture those accused of genocide in the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia; and what discussions he has had with the Serbian Government on this. [202704]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* Following the transfer of authority from the NATO mission in Bosnia (SFOR) to EU Force (EUFOR) Operation Althea on 2 December, EUFOR, together with the NATO HQ and in co-ordination with the local authorities at both state and entity level, will maintain efforts to locate and detain fugitive indictees within Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

The UK continues to urge all relevant authorities in Serbia and Montenegro (SaM), BiH and Croatia, including the Government of SaM and the relevant authorities in Belgrade and Podgorica, to fulfil their international obligation to co-operate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia by taking all necessary steps to apprehend and transfer to The Hague all fugitive indictees, in particular Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic and Ante Gotovina. Failure to do so will continue to delay their progress towards closer integration in Euro-Atlantic structures.

Afghanistan (Heroin Production)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of how much heroin was produced in Afghanistan in each of the last three years; how much of that was exported to the UK in each year; what estimate he has made of each figure for the current year; and if he will make a statement. [200029]

Mr. Rammell: The UK, as lead nation, is committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy. I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I made on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 17–18WS.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducts an annual survey into the level of opium poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan.

According to the survey, the potential opium production in each of the last three years was estimated as follows:

	tonnes
	Production
2001	185
2002	3,400
2003	3,600

The low tonnage in 2001 followed the highest ever recorded production figure in 1999 of 4,600 tonnes and 3,300 tonnes in 2000. In 2001, the Taliban banned cultivation. This ban was enforced with a combination of fear and bribery. It drove up the price of opium and the drug trade profited from increased prices for supplies from opium stockpiles.

There are no reliable figures as to how much of that opium is processed into heroin within Afghanistan.

Results of this year's survey showed that potential opium production was 4,200 tonnes. We estimate that approximately 25 to 30 tonnes a year of heroin is smuggled into the UK, that over 95 per cent. originated from Afghanistan and that it would require some 250 to 300 tonnes of opium to produce this amount of heroin. Working to eliminate opium production is vital for Afghanistan's future. As the UN survey makes clear, the challenge is substantial and complex.

Chagos Islands

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings he has attended with *(a)* hon. Members, *(b)* Chagos Islanders and *(c)* other organisations on matters relating to the Chagos Islands since 10 June; and what the nature of the discussion at those meetings was. [203131]

Mr. Rammell: I met hon. Members on 28 June, 23 September, 8 November and 16 November when various matters relating to the Chagos islands and the Chagossians were discussed. Representatives of the Chagossian community also attended the meetings on 28 June and 16 November. In addition I had a meeting with one of the Chagossians' legal advisers on 15 June, when I informed him of the making on 10 June of two Orders in Council relating to the British Indian Ocean Territory.

There have been no meetings relating to the Chagos islands with other organisations but when my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met the Mauritian Foreign Minister on 4 October, the future of the British Indian Ocean Territory was among the wide range of matters discussed.

Child Protection

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether the protection of children, including children abused through commercial sexual exploitation, will be a key priority within the Northern Ireland Policing Plan. [200516]

Mr. Pearson: The reduction of all types of crime is a key priority for the Northern Ireland Policing Service. Child protection is not specifically included in the current draft of the 2005/08 Annual Policing Plan as a performance indicator or target. Child protection will be included in Part III of the Annual Policing Plan which includes area which have a corporate impact.

Columbia

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance has been given by the UK Government to the Columbian armed forces. [203123]

Mr. Rammell: We have always made it clear that we do provide, from time-to-time, military and security advice and assistance to the Colombian Government. UK military assistance focuses on Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) training and British military education.

Mines and other explosive devices are responsible for a significant proportion of deaths among the Colombian armed forces, and also have a devastating effect on the civilian population. Bomb Disposal training, which forms the core of our military assistance programme, directly helps the Colombian armed forces to save civilian and military lives. We have also trained elements of the Colombian Authorities engaged in Counter-Narcotics work.

We have also assisted the Colombian military on human rights issues. For example, under the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Human Rights Project Fund (HRPF) we recently ran a project to raise awareness of the armed forces on their role in prevention of displacement and protection of the rights of internally displaced persons. We also have an ongoing project on human rights training for the military through the Colombian military justice school; over 5,000 service personnel benefited from such training in 2004.

British military training and education introduces personnel to British defence concepts, including the importance of accountable and democratic control of the armed forces, and the use of Rules of Engagement. It improves the ability of the Colombian armed forces to provide security for the Colombian people in a professional manner that preserves democracy and respects human rights.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether Rwandan troops have crossed into the Democratic Republic of Congo despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping force in the country. [202390]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned by reports that Rwanda plans to send troops into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We have not been presented with any conclusive evidence that proves Rwandan troops have entered the DRC.

The UK and the wider international community have made clear to Rwanda that any incursion into the DRC would be unacceptable. My right hon. Friend the International Development Secretary has spoken to President Kagame to emphasise that unilateral military action is not the answer to the serious problem of disarming the Ex-Forces Armees Rwandaises/ Interahamwe armed groups.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps *(a)* the Government, *(b)* the European Union and *(c)* the United Nations Security Council are taking to prevent the deterioration of relations between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda; and if he will make a statement. [202533]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned by the ongoing problems between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We are working with the Security Council, EU and regional partners to seek an urgent solution to the problem. We have urged both sides to use existing mechanisms such as the Joint Verification Mechanism and Tripartite Agreement to resolve the difficulties between them through dialogue. The UK and all partners have made clear to Rwanda that any incursion into the territory of the DRC would be unacceptable. Concerted international effort is also required to disarm foreign armed groups on DRC territory.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of recent reports of increased violence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [203802]

Mr. Mullin: The eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to be unstable. Outbreaks of violence have occurred periodically since the end of the war in the DRC.

We have urged neighbouring governments to play a constructive role in supporting the peace process in the region, including respecting the DRC's territorial integrity.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what resources his Department has allocated to assessing the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [203803]

Mr. Mullin: We have an Embassy in Kinshasa and Embassies and High Commissions in other countries in the Great Lakes region that monitor the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We exchange views with our international, EU and African partners. Our overseas posts are supported in their assessments by diplomatic and research officers at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. To provide the information requested on a year-by-year basis would incur disproportionate cost.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) his agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [200840]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and its agency, Wilton Park, have no empty properties in the United Kingdom. Day to day management of the overseas estate is devolved to our overseas posts and it is not, therefore, possible to provide details of all empty properties without incurring disproportionate cost.

None of the FCO's non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) have empty properties in the United Kingdom.

The British Council, one of the FCO's NDPBs, also has properties overseas but day to day management of their overseas estate, like the FCO, is devolved to their overseas posts and it is not, therefore, possible to provide details of all their empty properties without incurring disproportionate cost.

The BBC World Service is part of the BBC (which is a public corporation), and is funded by the FCO through a grant-in-aid. It does not have any empty properties in the UK.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [200845]

Mr. Rammell: Details of these events are not held centrally within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [200853]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office expenditure on consultants is published annually in our departmental report. However, we have listed below our expenditure for 2003–04 in advance of the publication of our departmental report which is due for publication in April 2005.

	£ million
2002–03	23.7
2003–04	[illegible]

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total external spending by his Department was on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200855]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not entered into any PPP deals in the last two years.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203334]

Mr. Straw: No substantive changes have been made to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) guidelines and criteria for selection or destruction of files over the past five years. The FCO's current selection policy is set out in Operational Selection Policy No. 13 'Britain's diplomatic relations, 1973–1996' which can be found on the TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/selection.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203336]

Mr. Straw: No substantive changes have been made to the guidelines and criteria for retention and destruction of departmental files since 1999, apart from the period of retention for consular case files. In February 2002 the existing guidelines and criteria were reissued by The National Archives as Operational Selection Policy (OSP) no 13. This can be found on TNA's website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/selection. In 2004 the period of retention for consular case files was reduced from six to three years after last action to ensure Foreign and Commonwealth Office compliance with Principle 7 of the Data Protection Act.

Environment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what motions have been proposed by the UK for consideration by the United Nations since 1997 relating to *(a)* the environment, *(b)* climate change and *(c)* contraction and convergence. [202086]

Mr. Rammell: The UK attaches great importance to environmental issues at the UN. As with other issues we normally work through the EU. Since 1997 the UK, vja the EU, has proposed, co-sponsored or given its support to various resolutions on environmental issues in UN bodies such as the General Assembly (UNGA), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP).

The UK attaches particular importance to progress on tackling climate change, and works through the Conferences of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), such as those on hazardous chemicals and biodiversity, to promote progress internationally on our climate change and other environmental objectives.

There are too many resolutions to list individually. However the relevant UNGA and ECOSOC texts can be found at the following website: www.un.org.documents, referring to "Resolutions" under the appropriate body. CSD documents can be found at the same website under "Economic and Social Council: Bodies by thematic area: Sustainable Development". Decisions of UNEP's Governing Councils can be found on www.unep.org under "About UNEP: Governing Bodies".

EU-Russia Summit

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions were held at the recent EU-Russia Summit on the need to *(a)* respect human rights and *(b)* uphold democratic values. [202520]

Mr. Rammell: The EU-Russia Summit on 25 November discussed human rights in the context of the on-going dialogue on the Four Common Spaces agreement, where the EU continues to insist on a human rights dialogue as an integral part of the Common Space on Freedom, Security and Justice. We hope this will result in an on-going and more structured dialogue on human rights between the EU and Russia.

Democratic values are also an important part of the Common Space on Freedom, Security and Justice, and were discussed in this context at the summit. There were also separate discussions of democratic values in the context of recent Russian internal political reforms and developments in Ukraine.

Fallujah

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his Oral Answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 372, on the Middle East and Ukraine, if he will request that Prime Minister Allawi furnish him with the date upon which he requested that US troops begin to prepare for a possible attack upon Fallujah. [202135]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

The date on which Prime Minister Allawi approached US commanders for assistance to prepare for possible operations in Fallujah is an issue for the US authorities and the Iraqi Interim Government.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his Oral Answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 372, on the Middle East and Ukraine, if he will request that Prime Minister Allawi furnish him with the date upon which he requested the assistance of British troops in preparation for a possible attack upon Fallujah. [202136]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

The request for British forces to deploy to North Babil in support of Iraqi and Coalition operations in central Iraq originated with the US military authorities, not Prime Minister Allawi, on 10 October 2004.

Feyz Mohammad

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to Iranian authorities regarding the case of the Afghan national Feyz Mohammad who has been sentenced to death. [201795]

Mr. Rammell: With our strong support, the European Union has urged the Iranian authorities to review the sentence imposed on Feyz Mohammad. We have on many occasions made representations about the use of the death penalty in Iran, and the sentencing to death of juvenile offenders. The UK, along with all other EU member states, co-sponsored a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly Third Committee on 17 November, which called on Iran 'to comply with its obligations under article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights not to impose the sentence of death for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age'.

Iran

Mr. Purchase: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to meet his Iranian counterpart to discuss the UN call for human rights reform in Iran; and if he will make a statement. [202897]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no immediate plans to meet his Iranian counterpart. He discussed a number of human rights concerns with the Iranian Ambassador on 8 November, including the use of the death sentence for juvenile offenders. The UK, along with all other EU member states, co-sponsored the resolution on human rights in Iran adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 17 November.

Moldova

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Moldovan ambassador concerning the arrest of Mr. Serafim Urechean, Mayor of Chisinau, on his return from the UK after an official visit; and if he will make a statement. [203597]

Mr. MacShane: Our ambassador in Moldova has met with Mr. Urechean since he was summoned for questioning, which we understand was in relation to allegations of corruption in the municipal budget, and remains in regular contact. We have had no discussions on the issue with the Moldovan chargé d'affaires in London.

Nigeria

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the conflict in the Niger Delta; and what discussions he has had with the Government of Nigeria on seeking a peaceful outcome. [203127]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned about a number of problems associated with the Niger Delta: governance; organised crime, including illegal oil bunkering; proliferation of arms; high unemployment; poverty, environmental degradation (including gas flaring) and ethnic unrest. I raised the Niger Delta with the Nigerian Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, in July. The British High Commissioner and his officials are regular visitors to the region and regularly discuss the issues with the Federal and State governments and legislatures.

Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what UK representations there will be at the 2005 non-proliferation treaty review conference; and what proposals they will put forward. [203128]

Mr. MacShane: The UK will send a full delegation to the 2005 review conference. We will stress the need for a stronger and more effective counter-proliferation regime and the central role of the NPT as its cornerstone. We will emphasise the importance of compliance with the treaty and will promote the adoption of safeguards. We will emphasise the strength

of the UK's positive record on nuclear disarmament and we will present a final report of the studies we have conducted on the verification of nuclear disarmament.

Passports (Biometric Data)

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which international *(a)* treaties and *(b)* agreements require the UK to introduce biometric passports. [203709]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer of 9 December 2004]:* There are currently no international treaties or agreements that require the UK to introduce biometric passports. However, the International Civil Aviation Organisation, of which the UK is a member has set international standards for travel document security, which include a biometric passport.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what biometric information is to be required by the United States for UK passport-holders wishing to enter that country. [203710]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer of 9 December 2004]:* From 30 September 2004, all travellers to the US have been digitally photographed and have had their index fingers digitally scanned on arrival at passport control.

The US Government has stated that anyone travelling to the US under the Visa Waiver Programme with a passport issued on or after 26 October 2005 must have a biometric passport in order to travel visa-free. The biometric identifier must comply with standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. These include a digitally encoded photograph and the personal information that already appears on the data page of UK passports.

Republic of Macedonia

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to recognise the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia; and if he will make a statement. [202534]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds) on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1554W.

Rwanda

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will list the meetings held in the last 18 months between *(a)* himself, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* UK representatives in Rwanda and (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of Rwanda in which the situation in (A) the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and (B) the Democratic Republic of Congo in general has been (1) the main topic on the agenda and (2) a major topic on the agenda; what proposals (x) he, *(y)* members of his Department and *(z)* UK representatives in Rwanda made for the involvement of Rwanda in stabilising the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo; how these proposals were met by (aa) members and (bb) representatives of the Government of (I) Rwanda and (II) the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [203814]

Mr. Mullin: My right honourable Friend the Foreign Secretary met President Kagame in May 2003 and January 2004. I met President Kagame in June 2004. We discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in all these meetings.

Officials from my Department and UK representatives in Rwanda regularly discuss the DRC with the Rwandan Government. To list the agenda and contents of all discussions between the UK and Rwandan Governments over the past 18 months would incur disproportionate cost.

The UK has consistently reminded Rwanda of its obligations to respect the territorial integrity of the DRC and the need for it to play a constructive role in building peace in the Great Lakes region.

South Korea

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the most recent International Atomic Energy Agency's report on South Korea's enrichment of uranium and plutonium. [202532]

Mr. MacShane: The IAEA report was examined in detail by the Board of Governors on 25–26 November 2004. They noted that the activities reported were of serious concern, but welcomed the corrective action that the Republic of Korea had taken. The board encouraged the Republic of Korea to continue its active co-operation with the agency, pursuant to its Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203450]

Mr. Straw: Yes.

Sudan

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions the Government has held with the Sudanese Government regarding the threatened expulsion of aid agencies working in Sudan; and if he will make a statement. [202528]

Mr. Mullin: On 29 November 2004, our Ambassador in Khartoum raised wit the local authorities reports of the decision to ask the Directors of Oxfam and Save the Children UK to leave Sudan. The Government of Sudan subsequently indicated that this decision has been suspended until further notice.

It is vital that all humanitarian agencies are given unfettered access to deliver assistance in Darfur. We will continue to make this clear as necessary to the Government of Sudan.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan about *(a)* respect for the ceasefire in Darfur, *(b)* protection of civilians in the internally-displaced persons camps and *(c)* obligations under the United Nations international human rights treaties, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. [202804]

Mr. Mullin: The UK Government make regular representations to the Government of Sudan, both bilaterally and at meetings of the Joint Implementation Mechanism, on the need for it to abide by the 8 April N'Djamena ceasefire agreement and the Abuja Security and Humanitarian Protocols, signed on 9 November.

We also regularly raise the need for it to ensure the protection of all civilians—including displaced persons—in Darfur, and to adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, including on the need for all returns to be voluntary and appropriate.

Our Embassy in Khartoum, both bilaterally and as part of the EU-Sudan dialogue, makes regular representations to the Sudanese Government on the need for it to abide by international humanitarian law, including UN international human rights treaties. These include, inter alia, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention Against Torture and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. During my visit to Sudan, I pressed Sudanese Justice Minister Yassin to ratify the Convention Against Torture as soon as possible.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make a statement on the recent expulsion of charity workers by the Government of Sudan. [203740]

Mr. Mullin: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Tweedale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Moore) today (UIN 202528).

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the use of kidnap and rape by the warring factions in Darfur. [203738]

Mr. Mullin: We deplore the use of rape and kidnap by the warring factions in Darfur. We have repeatedly made clear to all sides that such actions must stop and that there can be no impunity for such crimes.

We therefore welcome the establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry to investigate violations of human rights in Darfur and to determine who should be held accountable.

Tibet

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Chinese Government over their treatment of the people of Tibet, with particular regard to the death sentence on Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche; and if he will make a statement. [203139]

Mr. Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 731W, to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock)

Uganda

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps *(a)* the Government, *(b)* the European Union and *(c)* the United Nations Security Council are taking to support and promote peace talks in Uganda; and if he will make a statement. [202527]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome the statement by the Lords Resistance Army on 2 November 2004 that they are willing to enter peace talks. We and our EU partners have taken a significant interest in the conflict in northern Uganda. We are encouraging the Government of Uganda to seize this opportunity. We have made clear to them that we are ready to provide assistance in the negotiation process if requested.

Although the assistance of the UN has not been requested by the Government of Uganda, they are taking an increasing interest in the conflict. On 25 November 2004, members of the UN Security Council met President Museveni and urged him to bring the conflict to an end as soon as possible.

UK Citizens (US Detention)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK citizens are being detained by US authorities. [202967]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer of 9 December 2004]:* The latest figures available are for 30 June 2004. The total number of British nationals in detention in the US on that day was 717.

In addition, there were four British nationals detained in Guantanamo Bay by the US authorities.

Ukraine

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* opposition parties and *(b)* civil organisations in the Ukraine regarding reports of voting irregularities in the recent election. [202518]

Mr. Mullin: Opposition parties and civil organisations reported a large number of voting irregularities in the recent presidential elections in Ukraine. However, we base our concerns about the election process in Ukraine on the conclusions of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Election Observation Mission. ODIHR is the OSCE's internationally recognised professional and objective body for monitoring elections in OSCE participating states. In Ukraine, ODIHR identified serious shortcomings in the electoral process.

Our Embassy in Kiev remains in contact with all parties involved and continues to urge them to take forward the 1 December agreement brokered by EU High Representative Solana and President Kwasniewski

of Poland. We are also stressing the need for the process to deliver an outcome that genuinely reflects the will of the people.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of the Ukraine on the importance of respecting democratic values. [202519]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not made any direct representations to the Government of Ukraine. However, he has made a number of statements, including in this House on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 359W. Our Ambassador in Kiev is in daily contact with all parties involved, including the Ukrainian authorities, calling on them to take forward the 1 December agreement brokered by EU High Representative Solana and President Kwasniewski of Poland.

We have chosen to work with partners through the EU to maximise our influence on events in Ukraine. We have therefore fully supported and encouraged representations made on behalf of the EU by the Presidency and the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana. Both have been in regular contact with the Government of Ukraine at the highest levels in recent weeks.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of holding separation ballots in the Ukraine for the stability of that country and the region. [202932]

Mr. Mullin: We support the territorial integrity of Ukraine and do not believe that the people of Ukraine want to see the break up of their country. We understand that no ballots on separation are currently envisaged.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further diplomatic steps the UK Government is taking to ensure that political stability and democracy in the Ukraine is maintained. [202933]

Mr. Mullin: We continue to give our full and active support to the EU's efforts to facilitate a resolution to the crisis. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has spoken to the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, on two occasions since the flawed second round of the elections. We have issued several bilateral statements, in addition to EU statements, expressing concern about flaws in the electoral process. We remain in regular contact with all parties, including the Ukrainian authorities, and are urging them to continue to show restraint.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the UK Government plan to give to ensure that elections are both fair and transparent as judged against international electoral standards, in the event of a re-run of the elections in the Ukraine. [202934]

Mr. Mullin: In the event of a re-run, we understand that the original invitation to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to run an international election observation mission still stands. The UK will contribute at least 10 per cent. of the total number of observers requested by the OSCE.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the British ambassador to the Ukraine on the unrest in Ukraine following the second round of the presidential elections; and if he will make a statement. [203631]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has spoken directly to our ambassador in Kiev as the situation has evolved, as have I. We see his reporting every day. Our officials in London are also in daily contact with our embassy in Kiev.

UN Secretary General Report

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the report of the United Nations Secretary-General's high level panel on threats, challenge and change, published on 2 December. [202807]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has welcomed the report.

We support the Panel's broad approach of acting earlier to tackle conflict and to build consensus in acting more decisively against the broad range of threats.

The Report includes an important recommendation for a new Peacebuilding Commission to provide more focused management of individual post-conflict situations; it recognises that the UN must organise itself better to prevent conflict; it includes innovative proposals on improving the international communities response to threats of proliferation and terrorism; and it proposes a collective international 'Responsibility to Protect', that is to act against genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, among other important recommendations.

Reform of the United Nations is a priority for the Government and we will work closely with the Secretary-General and other countries to ensure full discussion of the proposals and implementation of the report's key findings that find consensus.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about its obligations under the *(a)* International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and *(b)* Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. [202802]

Mr. Rammell: Along with our EU colleagues we regularly stress to the Uzbek authorities the importance of meeting Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and UN commitments.

A national action plan on torture was introduced by the Uzbek Prime Minister on 9 March 2004. However this failed to mention the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. I have urged the Uzbek authorities to implement these recommendations without delay. Our Embassy raised this again most

recently with the First Deputy Foreign Minister on 1 December. We expect to see an amended plan in due course. At the same time the Deputy Foreign Minister was reminded of the importance of meeting the obligations of the UN Human Rights Committee.

On 11 November 2004, an EU delegation, including the UK, reminded the Deputy Foreign Minister of the importance we attach to the Parliamentary elections on 26 December 2004 meeting OSCE election standards. Along with the OSCE, we will continue to follow these elections and the prospects for democracy and political rights closely.

Yellowcake Production (Niger)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports the UK Government have received since 1998 about breaches of the IAEA inspection regime of yellowcake production in Niger. [203053]

Mr. MacShane: There is no IAEA inspection regime on the production of yellowcake. When Niger's Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (signed in June 2002) enters into force, Niger will be required to notify the IAEA of any exports of uranium ore unless the exports are for specifically non-nuclear purposes. Notification of exports for non-nuclear purposes will, likewise, be required when Niger's signature of the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement enters into force.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he had made to *(a)* the Zimbabwean Government and *(b)* the international community concerning the imprisonment of the Zimbabwe MP, Roy Bennett. [202943]

Mr. Mullin: We have made clear to the Zimbabwean Government directly and with our EU and other international partners that we condemn the abuse of their legal system and the harassment of opposition politicians. But it is our assessment that, given the Zimbabwean Government's stated hostility to HMG, and their claim that the Zimbabwean opposition are British sponsored, bilateral action on behalf of Mr Roy Bennett would be ineffective and possibly damaging to his interests.

DEFENCE

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [200808]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence is an equal opportunities employer, committed to maximising opportunities for all staff and playing a central role in the drive to promote diversity in the public sector. This includes a commitment to ensure that there should be no unfair discrimination on the basis of age.

The MOD will continue to keep its age policy under review in the light of forthcoming legislation.

Agency Staff

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people are employed by *(a)* the Warship Support Agency, *(b)* the Army Base Repair Organisation, *(c)* the Defence Aviation Repair Agency, *(d)* the Defence Bills Agency, *(e)* the Defence Storage and Distribution Agency, *(f)* the Non-deployable elements of the British Forces Post Office, *(g)* the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency, *(h)* the Pay and Personnel Agency and *(i)* the Met Office and Hydrographic Office; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body. [203760]

Mr. Ingram: A summary of staff numbers and net operating costs for all MOD's On-vote Agencies are listed in 'Defence Agencies', a supplementary document to the MOD Annual Report and Accounts which is available on the MOD website at http://www.mod.uk/publications/performance2003/supdoc_agencies.htm. This also gives details on staff numbers for MOD Trading Funds. Further details on running costs and future issues facing all MOD's On-vote Agencies and Trading Funds can also be found in the individual organisations' annual reports and accounts, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

We will continue to keep all our On-vote Agencies and Trading Funds under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that their functions are still required and that their status provides the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Armed Services (Fitness)

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes have occurred to the entry level fitness tests for the armed services since 2000. [201858]

Mr. Caplin: *Naval Service*—A Pre-Entry Joining Fitness Test (PJFT) was introduced for all Royal Navy Ratings and Royal Marine Other Ranks in June 2003. No physical test existed for RN applicants before that date. The test involves running 2.4km (1.5 mile) on a running machine and the timings required for applicants to achieve a pass vary according to age and gender. Individuals are allowed three attempts to pass, with 28 days being allowed between attempts. The test and the results remain valid for one year. There have been no changes to these tests since they were introduced.

Army—Entry level fitness tests for soldiers can be split into two—Physical Selection Standards for Recruits (PSSR) and the Common Military Syllabus (Recruits) (CMS(R)) input standards. The former is conducted at the Recruit Selection Centre with the latter occurring on arrival at the Phase 1 training unit. The PSSR selects the physical potential and the CMS(R) input tests predict the likelihood of physical success during training. All tests are gender free and the standards are set by the Service Directorate relevant to the cap badge.

Two changes to the PSSR were introduced in July 2003 based on scientific analysis. The Dynamic Lift Strength Test was 'capped' at 55 Kg and a Jerry Can Carry was introduced.

There have been no changes to the input standard tests for CMS(R) since 2000.

RAF—At present there are no entry fitness standards for RAF recruits. Airmen and airwomen recruits must, however, attempt the RAF Fitness Test (RAFFT) by the end of recruit training at RAF Halton. If they do not succeed in achieving the required standards, remedial fitness training is provided at their subsequent Phase 2 training school. The RAFFT was introduced in 1994. Its aim is to assess the physical fitness of all personnel (i.e. not just new recruits) on an annual basis.

Army Training

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the financial position of the Army Training and Recruitment Agency. [202267]

Mr. Caplin: Full details of the Army Training and Recruiting Agency's (ATRA) expenditure can be found in its published accounts as laid before Parliament on 6 July 2004 (Reference: HC 799).

The funding of the ATRA is reviewed as part of the MOD's Short Term Planning (STP) process. This routinely addresses changes to the Department's programme including variations in the training requirement.

Asbestos

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the principal areas covered by departmental files contaminated by asbestos. [199853]

Mr. Caplin: Approximately 63,000 files were stored in the basement of the Old War Office Building where significant levels of asbestos contamination were identified. The basement area provided accommodation for three file stores: (1) the sensitive archive under the control of the Departmental Records Officer. This store provided accommodation for files from a wide number of branches across the Ministry of Defence, covering an equally wide range of administrative and operational subjects; (2) a Defence Intelligence Staff file store; and (3) a small store used by Air Historical Branch.

Centrifuge

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has to install a human centrifuge at the purpose-built site at RAF Henlow; and what he estimates the costs to be. [202983]

Mr. Ingram: There are no current plans to procure or install a human centrifuge at RAF Henlow.

Death in Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* regulations and *(b)* procedures are applicable in the (i) Army, (ii) Royal Navy and (iii) Royal Air Force, following the death in service of individual personnel, governing (A) who decides which personal items are not returned, (B) how personal possessions are returned to the next of kin, (C) where the items which are not returned are stored, for how long, and under whose responsibility and (D) what information is given to the next of kin about personal items which are not returned. [203102]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Defence Medical Services (Cyprus)

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Defence Medical Services entered into an arrangement with Archbishop 3rd Makarios Hospital in Cyprus for the treatment of UK servicemen and women and their dependents; and what inspections the Defence Medical Services carried out of facilities available at the hospital in respect of ante-natal, neo-natal and maternity services before 27 September 1998. [200250]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Contracts

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many contracts were awarded to small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2001–02 by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible; and what the total value of the contracts was in each case. [201284]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested has only been collected by my Department since the beginning of financial year 2002–03 and then only in total terms. For the two most recent financial years I am able to provide the following data:

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Number of contracts awarded to small and medium enterprises	5,742	7,201
Total value of contracts (£ million)	275	530

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202402]

Mr. Caplin: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Minister's public engagements.

Environmental Tectonics

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department made a payment to Environmental Tectonics Corporation in respect of

their legal costs, in addition to the stage payments and the termination payment made to Environmental Tectonics Corporation, in connection with the cancelled RAF Centrifuge project. [202984]

Mr. Ingram: In addition to a terminal payment of £6 million made to Environmental Tectonics Corporation in connection with the cancelled RAF Centrifuge project a payment against the costs of a preliminary arbitration hearing was made of £0.4 million.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether negotiations between his Department and BAE Systems on the price and other details of Eurofighter Typhoon have concluded. [203793]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* National price negotiations between the Ministry of Defence and BAE Systems on the second tranche of Eurofighter Typhoons have been completed. When the terms and conditions of the draft contract are finalised, to the satisfaction of the four partner nations and the industrial consortium, it can be signed by NETMA on the nations' behalf. This is expected to be achieved before the end of the year. Parliament will then be informed in the usual way.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether EADS have agreed the terms for Tranche II for Eurofighter-Typhoon. [201521]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The terms for the order for Tranche 2 Eurofighter Typhoon are negotiated by the NATO Eurofighter and Tornado Management Agency, on behalf of all four partner nations, with a consortium of four national partner companies including EADS. The order will then be subject to approval by the respective governments. That process is still under way and Parliament will be notified in the usual way when the contract is awarded.

Fraud

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many armed forces personnel have been *(a)* disciplined, *(b)* court-martialled and *(c)* dismissed for improper financial claims relating to fraud since 1997. [202064]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The information is as follows:

Naval Service

42 Naval Service personnel have been tried by court-martial for fraud related offences. Of those, 33 were found guilty of which 18 were dismissed from the Service. Figures for trial at summary level are only available from 2001. Between then and 2003, 93 Naval Service personnel were dealt with at summary level for similar offences, three of whom were dismissed.

Army

109 officers and soldiers were tried by court-martial for fraud related offences, of which three officers and 26 soldiers were dismissed from the Service. Figures for trial at summary level are only available from 2001. Between then and 2003, 30 Army personnel were tried at summary level for similar offences.

RAF

106 Royal Air Force personnel have been disciplined at summary level for offences involving fraud. A further 112 were tried by court-martial. Of these 13 cases involved officers of whom 10 were found guilty and five dismissed from the Service. Of the remaining 99 cases involving airmen, 85 were found guilty and 14 were subsequently dismissed.

Future Joint Combat Aircraft

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what modifications will be required to the future joint combat aircraft to enable it to carry the Department's preferred mix of missiles. [201634]

Mr. Ingram: The joint strike fighter has been chosen to meet the UK's future joint combat aircraft requirement. It will enter UK service with medium and short range air to air and precision air to ground capability provided as part of the JSF baseline capability and no modifications are therefore required. Decisions on future weapon requirements for JSF have not yet been taken.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what missile systems the future joint combat aircraft will carry; whether such missiles will be carried internally; how many missiles the aircraft will be capable of carrying; and if he will make a statement. [201635]

Mr. Ingram: No final decisions have been taken on the weapons fit for the joint combat aircraft, beyond the requirement that it will have a precision bombing capability and an air to air capability when it enters service.

Weapons systems that we are considering integrating on joint combat aircraft as the requirement evolves include:

Advanced short range air-to-air missile
Advanced medium range air-to-air missile
Beyond visual range air-to-air missile (Meteor)
Paveway IV
Storm Shadow
Brimstone

Our considerations will cover which weapons should be carried internally and which should be carried externally on JCA. Until such decisions have been taken we cannot say how many weapons will be carried in total.

Future Rapid Effects System

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by how long the assessment phase for the Future Rapid Effects System programme has been extended; and why the funding for the assessment and development phase of this programme has been increased over that provided for in the original plans. [199838]

Mr. Ingram: The initial Assessment Phase for the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) programme was formally approved in May 2004 and the cost and time envelopes of this approval have not changed. Outputs from the work undertaken during this phase of the programme will be used to inform decisions that will influence the cost and duration of future phases.

A contract, scheduled to last two years, was placed with Atkins on 12 November 2004 for the Systems House role. Atkins will undertake a number of activities as part of the initial Assessment Phase, under the strategic direction of the Ministry of Defence, to inform future investment decisions.

Global Corvette Programme

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the development of the Global Corvette programme; and what he estimates the budget for this programme to be. [202981]

Mr. Ingram: I assume this question refers to the Future Surface Combatant (FSC) programme, which is still in its concept phase. The type and size of the FSC will be driven by the future capability requirement. No decisions have yet been taken about the timescale for delivering the FSC capability, and studies continue to develop ideas for the platform solution. As such, decisions have not yet been taken on funding for either its assessment phase or the main investment phase.

Gulf War Syndrome

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will make a statement on the findings of the independent inquiry into Gulf War Syndrome headed by Lord Lloyd of Berwick. [203568]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Lord Lloyd published the report into his unofficial investigation into Gulf Veterans' Illnesses on 17 November and we have studied it carefully as we would do with any other relevant material. We are of the view that it contains no new substantive or scientific evidence to support its conclusions and recommendations. It also fails to take into account the large amount of either substantive or scientific written material provided by the Ministry of Defence to Lord Lloyd to help inform his investigation.

The report gives the impression that 6,000 veterans are suffering from ill health due to their service in the 1990–91 Gulf Conflict. We understand this refers to those veterans who have claimed a war pension. Although these veterans have served in the Gulf, many of the claims will be for disablements and illnesses unrelated to their Gulf service. The number of veterans in receipt of pensions or gratuities for unspecified, symptomatic Gulf-related illnesses is approximately 1,400, less than 3 per cent. of the personnel who served in the Gulf. Additionally, only some 100 claimants have failed to receive an award for Gulf-related illnesses, not the 272 stated by the Lloyd report. I announced on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 354, that the MOD will investigate and review these cases that do relate to Gulf illness where these can be identified.

We have been surprised by Lord Lloyd's refusal to disclose who sponsored and funded his investigation. This contrasts with Government policy of transparency and openness set out in our policy document "Gulf Veterans' Illnesses: A New Beginning", published in July 1997.

Health Liability Claims

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force National Council Report of 10 July 1998 for the health liability claims of British servicemen who served in the Pacific Region in the 1940s and 1950s; and if he will make a statement. [201740]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The Ministry of Defence is examining files to establish whether or not consideration was given to the implications of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force National Council Report of 10 July 1998 for the health liability claims of British servicemen who served in the Pacific Region in the 1940s and 1950. I will write to the hon. Member once this examination is complete.

Regarding claims from servicemen consequent of their service in the Pacific under section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947. The British service personnel who served in the Pacific region in the 1940s and 1950s are prevented from pursuing claims for compensation from the Ministry of Defence. The repeal of section 10 by the Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces) Act 1987 was not made retrospective.

Compensation in the form of a War Pension Compensation is, however, available to all former members of HM forces suffering from service attributable illness or injury. War Pensions are paid by the Veterans Agency and are non-discretionary, not means-tested and are made on a no-fault, tax free and retrospective basis. They are up-rated annually. The Veterans Agency also makes provision for the widows of service and ex-service personnel whose death is attributable to service in the form of a War Widows Pension.

HMS Daring

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been carried out of the implications for the Royal Navy of the gap between the in-service date for HMS Daring and the phasing out of the Sea Harrier in 2006; and if he will make a statement. [201640]

Mr. Ingram: An element of operational risk has been accepted, though a significant air defence capability will still be maintained.

IT Contracts

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* projected cost at the time of tender and *(b)* actual cost at the time of completion was for each IT contract commissioned by his Department in the last five years. [201612]

Mr. Ingram: The Department commissions a very large number of IT contracts and in the last five year period around 20,000 IT related contracts of varying values were let. To ascertain which IT contracts were completed over the period and then compare their projected costs against actual costs could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Personnel Survey

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons questions relating to *(a)* racial and sexual harassment, *(b)* racial and sexual discrimination

and *(c)* bullying were omitted from the sixth serving personnel survey for the Army completed in August; and how many (i) pages and (ii) questions the full report comprised. [204028]

Mr. Caplin: The full Army Continuous Attitude Survey (CAS) was published on the MOD's internet site on 26 October. Due to an administrative error the copies of the Army CAS that were placed in the Library of the Houses were incomplete. This error has now been rectified and steps taken to ensure that a mistake of this type will not occur again. Copies of the full Army CAS have now been placed in the Library of the House.

The questions relating to racial and sexual harassment, racial and sexual discrimination and bullying were contained in the part of the Army CAS that was initially omitted from the copies placed in the Library of the House. The full Army CAS comprises 52 pages and 113 questions.

Procurement

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review the cost-effectiveness of his Department's procurement policy. [200124]

Mr. Ingram: Defence Procurement Policy is kept under continual review. For example, in 2004 the Defence Procurement Agency (DPA) undertook a major review of its performance in the implementation of Smart Acquisition and is now implementing a major change programme to implement more consistently good performance across the agency. At departmental level, we have also identified proposals for the establishment of a senior level procurement process owner to improve procurement across the Department and have established a new Acquisition Policy Board, chaired by my noble friend the Minister for Defence Procurement, that will, amongst other matters, review defence procurement policy issues.

RAF Bases

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian personnel are based in each RAF base (i) in Scotland, (ii) in England, (iii) in Wales, (iv) in Northern Ireland and (v) abroad; how these numbers have changed in each year since 1991; and if he will make a statement. [203813]

Mr. Caplin: Service Personnel data are not available at base level. Service location by local authority is published in TSP10. The latest publication available is July 2002. DASA are currently reviewing the source data and process by which location statistics are produced. The target date for completion of this review is January 2005.

There are no centrally held reliable data on the number of civilians at base level. However, the following table gives the total number of full time equivalent civilians in the RAF budgetary units by country.

Number of civilian personnel allocated to RAF budgetary units by country at 1 April each year

Full time equivalent

	Scotland	*England*	*Wales*	*N. Ireland*	*Abroad*	*Unallocated*	*Grand total*
1993	1,280	16,420	2,800	180	60	360	21,110
1994	1,300	15,590	2,940	190	70	440	20,540
1995	1,300	14,810	3,130	190	60	430	19,930
1996	1,320	14,140	3,300	210	50	450	19,470
1997	1,380	13,660	3,530	210	40	470	19,290
1998	1,310	13,330	3,650	220	50	480	19,040
1999	1,660	14,300	3,720	210	50	510	20,440
2000[1]	1,090	9,800	310	[1]—	30	340	11,570
2001	1,080	9,670	320	[1]—	20	320	11,400
2002	1,100	9,680	320	[1]—	10	350	11,460
2003	1,080	9,720	380	[1]—	10	200	11,390
2004	1,130	9,810	490	10	10	270	11,710

[1] the figure is less than 10.
[2] Figures for 1993 to 1999 include staff in RAF Logistics Command. This ceased to be a separate budgetary area on 30 March 2000 with personnel forming part of the Defence Logistics Organisation.
Note:
Data for 1991 and 1992 are not available.
Source:
DASA (Civilian)

Record Office

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the private and personal records of *(a)* Flight Lieutenant Jonathan Tapper and *(b)* Flight Lieutenant Richard Cook have been included in the transfer of records to Bourne Avenue, Hayes following the privatisation of the Ministry of Defence Records Office. [203885]

Mr. Caplin: The personal files of Flight Lieutenant Jonathan Tapper and Flight Lieutenant Richard Cook have not been transferred to the TNT managed archives at Hayes. They are held by the RAF Personnel Management Agency.

Scottish Infantry Regiments

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of each Scottish infantry regiment are *(a)* Scottish, *(b)* from elsewhere in the United Kingdom and *(c)* from overseas. [202572]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 107W, to my right hon. Friend for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes).

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201302]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201365]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Thales/BAe Systems

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's assessment is of the joint working between Thales and BAE Systems in Ministry of Defence contracts. [200123]

Mr. Ingram: BAE Systems and Thales work together on many Ministry of Defence contracts, including CVF. The Department's overall assessment is that their joint working on those contracts is constructive and professional.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Acute Hospital Beds

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he is taking to ensure that acute hospital beds are not used for patients who are ready to be discharged from hospital. [204104]

Angela Smith: I have set a number of targets this year to reduce the number of delayed discharges from hospital of patients who are medically fit, in particular that the number of delayed discharge days is reduced by 10 per cent. compared to 2003–04 levels.

My Department is taking forward a Regional Emergency Pressures Programme during 2004–05 which aims to streamline the processes relating to emergency patient flows in all hospitals by taking action under three broad headings: alternatives to hospital admission; streamlining in-hospital processes; and discharge issues.

As part of this Programme, a number of compulsory actions have been identified for all Trusts to take forward, including a requirement to plan for the discharge of patients much earlier in the process and to ensure, other than in exceptional circumstances, the decision to discharge is taken by 2pm.

An additional £6million non-recurrent funding was allocated to Boards this year to implement their winter plans which include a number of measures to improve the discharge of patients from acute hospitals. My Department has also made an additional £4 million available in 2004–05 for community care. With that investment, HSS Boards and Trusts have been required to provide services to support an additional 400 people in community settings by 31 March 2005.

Chemotherapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the cost of chemotherapy drugs in the Province. [202596]

Angela Smith: Approximately £7.9 million was spent on chemotherapy drugs in 2003–04. Approximately £13.8 million of chemotherapy drugs demand is currently anticipated for 2004–05.

Patients are being diagnosed earlier and are living longer and are therefore being given more courses of chemotherapy. The development of new, more effective but more expensive drugs is also driving up the cost.

Child Fostering

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to encourage the fostering of children in the Province. [202582]

Angela Smith: The Department is committed to improving the lives of looked after children and has promoted a number of initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of foster carers.

In 2002–03, to promote and improve fostering services, the Department made the full implementation of three key National UK National Minimum Standards a Priority for Action for HSS Trusts.

Resources of £14.8 million were spent on foster care in 2002–03.

New Quality Standards for Fostering Agencies are currently being consulted upon by the Department with the aim of improving the quality of services to health and social services users.

As proposed in the Draft Priorities and Budget 2005–08 document, the Department intends to provide an increase in foster care allowances and the introduction of a salaried foster care scheme, thereby enabling people to become foster carers who are reliant on paid employment, and the set up of a 24 hour/seven days a week support service for foster carers.

Community Care

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funds are available for the provision of community care packages during the remainder of financial year 2004–05, broken down by health board area. [204103]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Delayed Discharges

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many delayed discharge patients there are in Northern Ireland, broken down by health board area. [204102]

Angela Smith: The number of delayed discharge patients at 31 August 2004, broken down by health board area, is detailed in the following table.

Health board area	Number of delayed discharge patients (August 2004)
EHSSB	201
NHSSB	141
SHSSB	49
WHSSB	23
Northern Ireland	414

Notes:

1. Delayed discharges are recorded as a snapshot of the position at the end of each month. The latest available validated information is in respect of the position at 31 August 2004.
2. Figures for health board area were calculated by totalling the number of patients delayed in each provider (hospital) trust within the appropriate health board area.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [200881]

Mr. Pearson: The total expenditure on energy for the past two years was:

	£
2002–03	491,164
2003–04	763,857

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [200882]

Mr. Pearson: We have had no expenditure on criminal damage during the last years.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years, giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202408]

Mr. Paul Murphy: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202514]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Human Rights Act 1998 has been relied on in numerous cases both civil and criminal. The Northern Ireland Office does not keep a record of cases brought against it where a party to the proceedings has relied on the Act. Without analysing each case brought against the Department in detail it would be difficult to determine the impact of the Human Rights argument in any particular case as it is normally only one of a number of arguments deployed.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203303]

Angela Smith: The implementation of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will not affect the reviewing procedures for the selection of files deemed to be of historical and other research value. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has a records management policy that includes the appraisal of departmental files in order to identify files of permanent value. Files are selected for preservation on this basis when brought forward to the Public Record Office reviewers by Departments. Only a few sample files are preserved where the series of files is deemed to be of no historical interest. If a series is deemed to be of particular historical importance the complete series is preserved. The overall numbers of files selected for preservation will continue to depend on the historical value of the files reviewed in any given period.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202172]

Mr. Pearson: For the period April 2003 to March 2004:

(a) 7 mobile telephones were used by Ministers and Special Advisors of the Northern Ireland Office, and

(b) 1,677 mobile telephones were used by officials of the Northern Ireland Office and the 11 Departments of the NI Administration.

Of these 27 were lost or stolen incurring a cost of £1,282.

Information in the form requested for previous years is not held centrally and would only be available at disproportionate cost.

Disabled Access

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance is available to businesses in the Province for adaptations to premises in response to new disability discrimination legislation. [202604]

Mr. Spellar: The new Disability Discrimination legislation that came in on 1 October 2004 affected businesses both as employers and as providers of services to the public. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004, which implemented the Employment Framework Directive, extended the Disability Discrimination Act to cover certain new occupations and employers with fewer than 15 employees. Also 1 October 2004 saw the introduction of the final stage of duties on service providers. From that date they have had to make 'reasonable adjustments' in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access. In effect this means that where a physical feature of a building makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services, a service provider will have to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide a reasonable means of avoiding it.

There is no specific funding available to help businesses with duties under the Disability Discrimination Act to meet these new requirements. This is because employers and service providers are only required to do what is reasonable, and factors such as the cost and practicability of making reasonable adjustments, and the financial and other resources available to the business will be taken into account in determining what is reasonable.

The Department for Employment and Learning does not directly provide assistance to businesses to adapt premises in response to disability discrimination legislation. However, in certain circumstances assistance can be provided through Access to Work (NI) towards adaptation of premises to help overcome employment related obstacles faced by disabled employees.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has undertaken wide-ranging publicity campaigns to raise awareness of these new duties in order to give employers and service providers the opportunity to understand, and plan for, their implementation. Their campaigns have been supported by a variety of information leaflets and promotional literature.

EU Directives

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to business of each. [202513]

Mr. Paul Murphy: There have been no European Union directives or regulations implemented in the Northern Ireland Office in each of the last two years.

External Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202515]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The total cost for the use of external consultants in the Northern Ireland Office in each of the last two years is as follows.

	£
2002–03	2,418,272
2003–04	1,592,494
2004–05[1]	2,880,224

[1] Up to and including September 2004.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the total external spending by his Department was on Private Finance Initiative consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202516]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The total external spending by this Department on Private Finance Initiative consultants in each of the last two years including how may full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was and how many consultancy firms were used by this Department over this period are as follows:

Causeway Programme

	Firm 1	*Firm 2*
Year 2003–04 Firms used (2)		
FTE	1	7
Billed Days	5.64	73
Total Paid (ex VAT)	£14,664.00	£57,969.00
Implied Cost per Consultant	£2,600.00	£794.10
Year 2004–05 Firms Used (0)		
FTE	—	—
Billed Days	—	—
Total Paid (ex VAT)	—	—
Implied Cost per consultant	—	—

IT Division

NIO ITD spent approximately £30,000 on "Partnerships UK" for investigating PFI options for delivery of the FLAX Programme during 2002–03. This equated to approximately 12 consultancy days.

This answer is in respect of the Northern Ireland Office only and does not include the 11 departments of the NI administration.

Health Expenditure

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by local health *(a)* boards and *(b)* trusts on (i) external contract staffing, (ii) external consultants and (iii) advertising in each of the last five years. [202603]

Angela Smith: The information requested is detailed in the following tables. The figures for external contract staffing and consultancy services are collected as one amount on the annual financial returns and as a result, the individual elements cannot be identified.

Total NI expenditure on external contract staffing and consultancy services[1]

£000

External contract staffing and consultancy services	1998–99	1999–2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Board					
Eastern	59	108	90	119	56
Northern	135	54	154	142	174
Southern	111	126	57	149	0
Western	41	59	44	109	31
NI total	345	347	345	518	261

[1] Please note that any discrepancies in the totals are due to roundings

Note
Expenditure in this category can vary from year-to-year and the amounts can relate to how services are provided in individual Trusts/Boards

Total NI expenditure on advertising by Board[1]

£000

Advertising	1998–99	1999–2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Board					
Eastern	31	45	37	59	59
Northern	14	23	44	42	54
Southern	30	72	87	49	108
Western	6	21	25	165	54
NI total	81	162	193	315	275

[1] Please note that any discrepancies in the totals are due to roundings

Total NI expenditure on external contract staffing and consultancy services by Trust[1]

£000

External contract staffing and consultancy services	1998–99	1999–2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Trust					
Altnagelvin	8	8	8	8	8
Armagh and Dungannon	31	45	21	14	23
Belfast City Hospital	62	193	207	191	203
Causeway	60	47	36	57	116
Craigavon and Banbridge	38	72	86	54	76
Craigavon Area	38	99	38	130	181
Down Lisburn	40	27	6	19	65
Foyle	34	12	4	9	8
Greenpark	0	0	0	0	0
Homefirst	59	87	86	188	274
Mater	21	4	0	0	0
Newry and Mourne	12	33	22	61	107
NIAS	41	131	173	258	273
North and West Belfast	28	23	62	90	34
Royal Group of Hospitals	209	215	221	223	199
South and East Belfast	8	0	0	0	0
Sperrin Lakeland	14	15	11	22	0
Ulster	16	112	41	17	14
United	112	21	28	36	83
NI total	616	921	820	1,146	1,465

[1] Please note that any discrepancies in the totals are due to roundings.

Note:
Expenditure in this category can vary from year-to-year and the amounts can relate to how services are provided in individual Trusts/Boards

Total NI expenditure on advertising by Trust

£000

Advertising	1998–99	1999–2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Trust					
Altnagelvin	74	56	100	113	221
Armagh and Dungannon	53	66	100	77	71
Belfast City Hospital	84	117	157	168	190
Causeway	68	61	49	135	105
Craigavon and Banbridge	13	54	92	70	87
Craigavon Area	49	74	89	49	97
Down Lisburn	109	101	165	208	214
Foyle	89	91	116	129	149
Greenpark	47	65	76	138	116
Homefirst	80	84	135	193	200
Mater	31	37	50	65	71
Newry and Mourne	66	100	73	102	27
NIAS	18	14	22	33	34
North and West Belfast	66	60	89	201	185
Royal Group of Hospitals	108	133	160	274	250
South and East Belfast	114	76	86	122	179
Sperrin Lakeland	81	108	110	127	152
Ulster	75	101	154	253	175
United	64	105	101	118	147
NI Total	1,289	1,503	1,923	2,575	2,671

[1] Please note that any discrepancies in the totals are due to roundings

Health Funding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the proposed percentage of health funding that will be available for service expansion and development between 2005 and 2008. [202599]

Angela Smith: Consultation on the draft Budget Settlement for 2005–06 to 2007–08 concluded on 7 December 2004. The percentage of Health and Social Services funding available for service expansion and development will not be known until the outcome of this consultation has been finalised and the Revised Budget published.

Home Adaptation Budgets

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether allowances to the set home adaptation budgets are made in respect of social housing in areas where there are few new houses which are suitable for the elderly and disabled. [204114]

Mr. Spellar: The Housing Executive's adaptation service for its tenants is driven by demand and budgets are set to reflect that demand. The availability of new houses would not be a factor in setting budgets. Rehousing people whose circumstances have changed, and as a consequence whose homes are no longer suitable for their needs, would most likely only be considered in areas with a greater supply of housing stock, especially newer housing.

Human Rights Commission (Annual Report)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment he has made of *(a)* Section 2 Paramilitary violence and *(b)* Section 3 Systems for investigating deaths of the Chief Commissioner's Overview of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2004 [202876]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I utterly deplore and condemn the vicious attacks highlighted in section 2 of the Chief Commissioner's overview, which in many cases have left the victims physically and mentally scarred for life. Despite making every effort to bring to justice those responsible for these acts, the police can be hampered when in their investigations if the victims fail to cooperate either through fear or because to do so may implicate them in other crimes. Prosecutions are therefore extremely rare.

However, Government and law enforcement agencies continue to seek ways of addressing the problem effectively. The Independent Monitoring Commission will continue to monitor the level of paramilitary activity including shootings and assaults and report on this regularly to the British and Irish Governments.

In relation to Section 3, following judgments of the European Court of Human Rights the Government has put together a package of remedial measures designed to address the judgments and improve the investigation of deaths including the inquest system. This package reflects the current position of the Government and remains under the consideration of the Committee of Minister's Deputies in Strasbourg.

Furthermore, the Government recognises the continuing hurt that many feel about the number of deaths that remain unresolved. For those who have suffered the loss of loved ones, the possibility of coming to terms with what has happened in the past is made more remote because there remain significant unanswered questions. We must do everything possible to give those people the best chance of achieving that.

The Serious Crime Review Team within the Police Service of Northern Ireland was established by the Chief Constable this spring to re-examine the files on some of these murders, and to establish whether there is any prospect of fuller reinvestigation leading to an outcome. It is recognised that this is painstaking work and places significant demands on police resources. As a consequence the Government has been working with the Police Service of Northern Ireland on how this work might be expanded to process greater numbers of unresolved deaths and to do so in a way that commands the confidence of the wider community.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202401]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The information requested by the hon. Member could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

North-east Area Plan

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the earliest possible date is on which he expects to receive the north-east area plan for Northern Ireland. [202882]

Angela Smith: The Planning Service has decided to concentrate as many of the agency's resources as possible for a period of time, initially for six months, on the operational side of the business to deal with planning applications. This is because of the rapidly increasing and unprecedented workload pressures in this area. The temporary reallocation of resources will, however, have a knock-on effect on emerging area plans and progress on the remaining area plans will be slower then previously anticipated.

The north-east area plan 1987–2002 will be superseded by the publication of the northern area plan 2016 and work on the draft northern area plan is in an advanced state of preparation. The importance of delivering full area plan coverage is recognised and the Planning Service will move forward with the area plan programme, including the northern area plan as quickly as is feasible. It is not possible at this stage however, to be precise about a time scale for its publication.

Nursing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the nursing resource implications in the Province from the

mentoring scheme suggested in the Consultation on a Standard to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice document. [202615]

Angela Smith: The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has undertaken a consultation on a standard to support learning and assessment in practice; that consultation has now closed and the responses are being evaluated by the NMC. A decision on consideration of workforce implications will be made once the outcome of the NMC's consultation exercise is known.

Operating Theatres

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will bring forward amendments to legislation to allow operating department practitioners in the Province to have responsibility for the controlled drugs used in operating theatres. [202611]

Angela Smith: To date, the legislation regarding possession and supply of controlled drugs has confined the authority to possess or supply controlled drugs in the operating department to the nursing sister in the department and it has not been appropriate to delegate the holding of the controlled drug keys to other professional groups. However, as of September 2004, the Operating Department Practitioners and Miscellaneous Amendments Order has opened a new part of the Health Professions Council register (part 13) for Operating Department Practitioners. Although the number of Operating Department Practitioners in Northern Ireland is small, this does enhance their professional standing and it is anticipated that the role of the Operating Department Practitioner vis-à-vis the Registered Nurse will continue to evolve. The Department is about to undertake a review of non medical peri-operative staffing skill mix, roles, education and training needs and the issue of handling of controlled drugs will be revisited following the outcome of this review.

Paramilitaries

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the *(a)* Provisional IRA, *(b)* INLA, *(c)* UDA and *(d)* UVF (i) have been convicted of criminal offences and (ii) have had their assets seized following investigations by the Assets Recovery Agency since its formation. [204057]

Mr. Pearson: During the period 1 February 2003 to 30 September 2004, a total of three persons were convicted of membership offences in Northern Ireland[1]. Two of the three were convicted of membership of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the other of membership of the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF). The three defendants were also convicted of a number of other offences.

Cases are referred to the Assets Recovery Agency by law enforcement agencies. From its formation in February 2003 to the end of November 2004, the Agency had been referred 48 cases. As at 30 November, 12 cases were under active investigation with a total asset value of £4.9 million and eight cases were under assessment. The Agency has also frozen or recovered assets in a further eight cases involving around £3 million. The cases cover the whole range of organised crime among all groupings and areas across Northern Ireland.

[1] Being a Member of a Proscribed Organisation (s. 11(1) Terrorism Act 2000); Belonging to a Proscribed Organisation (s. 30(1)(a) Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1996).

Police Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers stationed in east Belfast were on out-of-station duties on an average shift in the last period for which figures are available. [202869]

Mr. Pearson: An average of 26 officers per shift are on out-of-station duties in East Belfast DCU.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police stations were in operation in east Belfast in each of the last six years. [202872]

Mr. Pearson: Since 2001, when the DCU was formed, three stations have constituted East Belfast DCU, Strandtown, Willowfield and Mountpottinger.

East Belfast DCU is also responsible for the security of sites at Garnerville, Knocknagoney and Brooklyn.

Prior to 2001 Strandtown sub-division consisted of Strandtown and Dundonald stations.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers were stationed in east Belfast in each of the last six years. [202873]

Mr. Pearson: Police officers stationed in east Belfast DCU over the past four years is detailed as follows:

	Number of officers
2004	398
2003	400
2002	382
2001	426

East Belfast DCU did not exist in it's current form prior to 2001. It's boundaries and stations were different and a comparison is unrepresentative.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers work within the east Belfast district of Northern Ireland, broken down by principal duty conducted by each officer. [202880]

Mr. Pearson: There are 398 officers, including part-time reserve, working within the east Belfast district of Northern Ireland. Their principal duties are detailed as follows:

222 response and security

68 part-time reservists

36 police support and Criminal Justice Unit officers

32 neighbourhood policing team officers

20 CID officers

15 crime team and motorcyclists and

5 senior officers.

Radiography

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make it his policy to collate information on the number of patients waiting for *(a)* MRI scans and *(b)* other radiological investigations. [202597]

Angela Smith: Officials will shortly be undertaking a review of the waiting list information collected by the Department. Waiting list information for MRI scans and other radiological procedures will be considered as part of this review.

Officials will also be working closely with colleagues in Great Britain and will be taking account of the outcome of the Statistics Commission report "Enhancing the Value of Health Statistics: User Perspectives".

Regional Adolescent Psychiatry Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many whole time equivalent consultants in child and adolescent psychiatry are working *(a)* in Belfast and *(b)* within each of the Province's health boards. [203092]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Number of consultants in child and adolescent psychiatry working in Belfast trusts

Trust	*Whole time equivalent*
Greenpark trust	0.64
Royal Group of hospitals	3.05
South and East Belfast HSS trust	2.00
Ulster community and hospitals trust	2.00
Total	7.69

Number of consultants in child and adolescent psychiatry by health board

Area	*Whole time equivalent*
NHSSB	2.00
SHSSB	3.00
EHSSB	7.69
WHSSB	2.00
Total	14.69

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the longest time a patient has been waiting for child and adolescent psychiatry assessment is at each health trust in the Province. [203093]

Angela Smith: The following table details the longest time a patient has been waiting for child and adolescent psychiatry assessment, at each of the Health Trusts in Northern Ireland, which provide Child and Adolescent Psychiatry services. The latest information available is representative of the position at 30 September 2004.

Provider trust	*Longest wait (days)*
Down and Lisburn HSS trust	635
Ulster community and hospitals HSS trust	163
Foyle HSS trust	1,334
Sperrin Lakeland HSS trust	986
Homefirst community HSS trust	275
Craigavon and Banbridge community HSS trust	314
Newry and Mourne HSS trust	488
Armagh and Dungannon HSS trust	724
South and East Belfast	111
The Royal Group of Hospitals HSS trust	1,456

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of *(a)* child psychologists, *(b)* child psychotherapists, *(c)* social workers, *(d)* nurses and *(e)* occupational therapists, in the child and adolescent psychiatry specialty in the Province. [201930]

Angela Smith: In October 2002 the Department initiated a wide-ranging independent review of the law, policy and service provision affecting people with a mental health problem or a learning disability. Among other things, this review is examining child and adolescent mental health services. It is likely that many of the recommendations from this review will have workforce implications. The review is expected to complete towards the end of 2005 and further consideration will be given to the work force issues at that stage.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the remit of the Mental Health Review chaired by Professor Bamford includes regional child and adolescent psychiatry services. [201931]

Angela Smith: The Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (Northern Ireland) does include regional child and adolescent psychiatry services and is examining the full range of mental health services for children and young people. It hopes to produce a draft report for consultation around spring 2005.

Roads

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what expenditure there has been on *(a)* new roads schemes and improvements and *(b)* repairs to the roads network in the Lagan Valley constituency in each year since 1997. [204016]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Jeffrey Donaldson, dated 10 December 2004:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about expenditure on new roads schemes and improvements and repairs to the road network in the Lagan Valley constituency in each year since 1997. I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service does not maintain details of expenditure on a parliamentary constituency basis, however, the table below shows the expenditure incurred by Roads Service on capital (major and minor) road improvement schemes, and on maintenance activities in the Lisburn City Council area during the period 1997/98 to 2001/02. Expenditure details by district council area for 2002/03 and 2003/04 are not yet available.

£000

	Capital[1]	Maintenance
1997–98	2,368	4,915
1998–99	928	4,006
1999–2000	646	4,551
2000–01	837	4,239
2001–02	906	5,141

[1] Capital includes major and minor works but excludes street lighting, car parks and plant/depot.

In providing this information, I should like to emphasise that Roads Service does not simply apportion its total budget for capital and maintenance expenditure equally across district council areas. In particular, major road improvements are prioritised on a country-wide basis, not on a district council basis, taking account of a broad range of criteria such as strategic planning policy, traffic flows, number of accidents, potential travel save times, environmental impact and value for money. While the actual spend on a major works scheme may be within one council area, the benefits of such schemes are not confined to the district council area or constituency in which they are located.

The resources available for minor capital schemes are allocated to the four Roads Service Divisions and, in turn, apportioned across district council areas on a needs-based priority approach using indicators such as population, weighted road lengths and the number of accidents. This ensures, so far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds across the country.

Similarly the resources available for each maintenance activity (e.g. resurfacing, patching, gully emptying, grass cutting etc) are apportioned to district council areas using appropriate indicators of need.

I hope this information is helpful.

Social Housing

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new social housing units have been built in the Lagan Valley constituency in each year since 1997. [204015]

Mr. Spellar: Details of numbers of social housing units started in the Lagan Valley constituency in each year since 1997 are as follows:

	Number of units
1997–98	170
1998–99	137
1999–2000	229
2000–01	73
2001–02	9
2002–03	113
2003–04	114

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged; [201377]

(2) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for special advisers in his Department since its implementation. [201294]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Truth and Reconciliation Processes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with which groups he has discussed possible truth and reconciliation processes in the Province. [202030]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Following my statement to Parliament earlier this year, setting out my priorities and objectives for taking forward this work, my initial focus has been on taking private soundings. My deliberations have benefited from comments from a range of parties, both directly and in correspondence, and have also taken account of the wide range of views expressed in the course of Angela Smith's recent consultation with victims and their families in the context of developing the next phase of victims' strategies.

The Government are clear that any process for dealing with the past in Northern Ireland must be one that all sections of the community can feel comfortable with and be involved in. While my consultation has, to date, been at an individual and private level, I recognise the need for this to become a much wider exercise which takes account of the needs and concerns of all people across Northern Ireland, and I hope to announce how this process will be extended in the new year.

Ulster Defence Association

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will make it his policy that *(a)* the Government and *(b)* organisations supported by the Government will direct no settlement or compensatory payment to the UDA, their members or associates. [203047]

Mr. Spellar: The UDA is a proscribed organisation and receives no Government payments. UDA membership or association does not of course prohibit individuals from receiving Government payments, compensatory or otherwise, to which they may be entitled for other reasons.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of those applying for antisocial behaviour orders in the past 12 months were registered social landlords. [204166]

Keith Hill: The number of antisocial behaviour orders, as notified to the Home Office, where the main complainant was a registered social landlord is as follows:

January to June 2004 (latest data available): 29

Data for the 3rd quarter of 2004 will be published in January 2005.

Avon Fire Brigades Union

Nick Harvey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the resolution submitted to his Department by the Avon Fire Brigades Union with reference to the future provision of fire and rescue control centres in the region. [199825]

Mr. Raynsford: I have refused the request for a public inquiry. In a letter sent on 29 November 2004 to the chair of the South West Regional Management Board, I explained that there was no sound reason for initiating a public inquiry at this stage in the project. Any such inquiry would inevitably delay the whole national programme which will improve the capability and resilience of fire control operations.

The Regional Control Centre project is itself a result of an independent review of fire and rescue control rooms by Mott MacDonald, which concluded in 2000 that current arrangements were costly and inefficient.

When the Government consulted widely on the report in December last year there was broad support for the regional control centre approach. Earlier this year all Chairs of Regional Management Boards formally offered their commitment to making the project a success, including the Chair of the SW RMB.

It is important to emphasise that this is a national project, designed to modernise and improve the quality of controls all over the country and to achieve national resilience by enabling control centres in all the regions to back each other up in the event of an emergency.

The Government could not support any package of proposals that would lead to a worse Fire and Rescue Service.

The modernisation of the Service and the establishment of regional fire control centres is not about cuts—it is about creating a better, more efficient Fire and Rescue Service that saves more lives.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202450]

Phil Hope: The total cost to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for accountancy services for the last two years was as follows:

£

	Amount
2002–03	3,317,568
2003–04	3,133,224

These services are provided in-house.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [202452]

Phil Hope: The information is as follows:

(a) Ministerial cars

(i) 2002–03

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 397–98W by my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Alexander). A letter was deposited in the Library in relation to this response which gave the cost of ministerial cars for 2002–03.

(ii) 2003–04

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Ruth Kelly) asked Nick Matheson, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the cost of ministerial vehicles provided to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003–04.

(b) Taxis

The cost of taxis used by Ministers and officials of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its agencies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [202455]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 1 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 745W.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in the last two years. [202456]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not undertaken any refurbishment projects in its ministerial private offices in the last two years.

EU Directives

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying the *(a)* title and purpose of each, *(b)* cost to public funds of each and *(c)* cost to businesses of each. [202465]

Phil Hope: The information is as follows:

(a) During the last two years the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has implemented one Directive: 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the environmental effects of certain plans and programmes (the "Strategic Environmental Assessment" or SEA Directive).

(b) The Regulatory Impact Assessment for this Directive includes estimates of the overall cost of compliance and copies are available in the library of the House and available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [202463]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (HQ) undertook an equal pay review in 2003. A summary was deposited in the Library of the House in April 2004. Equality issues continue to be considered as part of the annual pay reviews, and the position monitored following implementation of annual pay awards.

Government Offices for the Regions

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff are employed by the Government offices

for the regions; and how many have been seconded from Government Departments, broken down by Department. [202978]

Phil Hope: All staff working in Government offices are employed by one of the Departments which conduct business through them. There are currently 3,114 staff working for the Government offices (including permanent staff, fixed term appointments, casuals and staff on maternity leave, career breaks etc.) employed by seven sponsor Departments are tabled as follows:

	Number
The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)	1,022
Department for Transport (DFT)	210
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)	737
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	171
Department for Education and Skills (DFES)	745
Home Office (HO)	222
Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)	7

A further 564 staff are co-located in Government office accommodation but not fully integrated into the management structure are tabled as follows:

Department	*Number of staff co-located*
DFES/Sure Start/Childrens Fund	160
Department of Health	265
Treasury	1
Forestry Commission	2
Cabinet Office/Government News Network	90
Home Office	37
ODPM	9

In addition there are 62 staff on short-term loan to Government offices from Government Departments and agencies:

Department	*Number*
ODPM	7
DfT	2
DTI	5
DEFRA	5
DfES	9
Home Office	9
DCMS	1
Jobcentre Plus	2
HM Prison Service	1
ACAS	2
The Countryside Agency	4
English Nature	1
DWP	2
Regional Public Health	1
Highways Agency	3
DCA	2
Customs and Excise	1
FCO	2
Environment Agency	1
Government News Network	1
HM Treasury	1

Grants

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cash incentive scheme grants have been made in each Government office region in each year since 2001–02; and what the total value was of these grants in each region. [203137]

Keith Hill: The information reported by local authorities in each Government office region on the number of cash incentive scheme grants made in each year since 2001–02 and the total value of their grants are tabled as follows:

£000

	2001–02		*2002–03*		*2003–04*	
	Grants	*Total spend*	*Grants*	*Total spend*	*Grants*	*Total spend*
North East	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yorkshire and Humber	3	13	0	0	1	8
East Midlands	3	11	6	8	5	5
East of England	91	510	53	303	89	317
London	373	7,962	386	7,534	425	8,777
South East	65	840	53	830	30	682
South West	43	235	39	210	32	388
West Midlands	83	256	34	68	29	44
North West	0	0	0	0	0	0
England	661	9,827	571	8,953	611	10,221

Housing

Ms Oóna King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the London Housing Board's decision to invest £15 million for building new affordable housing outside London. [202923]

Keith Hill: The London's Housing Board's recommendations to Ministers for the allocation of housing investment in London for 2004–05 and 2005–06 included a proposal to develop cross regional mobility by investing £15–20 million of the £1.4 billion London Approved Development Programme (ADP) in affordable housing schemes in the East and South East regions in return for nominations to those schemes. Ministers agreed this proposal.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the viability of the One + One + One policy for providing a mixture of housing for rent, for sale and shared ownership in rural exception sites. [203105]

Keith Hill: Local authorities should define in their local plans what they consider to be affordable housing in their area, in terms of the relationship between local incomes and house prices or rents. The rural exception

policy in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing" (PPG3) enables local authorities to grant permission for small sites solely for affordable housing for local needs in perpetuity. This policy ensures the deliverability of affordable housing in rural areas where the availability of land for development is more constrained than in urban areas. General market or mixed tenure schemes are therefore inappropriate for rural exception sites.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's consultation paper "Influencing the size, type and affordability of housing" published in July last year proposed to add new policy to PPG3 which would ensure that the affordable housing provision sought should not make development unviable, and encouraged local planning authorities to work with developers to ensure planning objectives reflect the development potential of sites. The update to PPG3 will be published early in the new year.

Housing Corporation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* administrative and *(b)* total expenditure of the Housing Corporation was in 1997; and what the forecast expenditure is for (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06. [203556]

Keith Hill: As published in the Housing Corporation's annual accounts for 1997–98, their administrative expenditure in 1997–98 was £29 million and the total expenditure (including administration) was £1,328 million.

As at December 2004 the Housing Corporation's budget for administration is some £37 million in 2004–05 and 2005–06, out of total budgets of some £1,747 million and £1,723 million respectively. For 2005–06, these figures may be adjusted, for example following Regional Housing Board recommendations on the split of Regional Housing Pot resources.

Housing Stock

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total council-owned housing stock is in each housing authority in England; and how many and what percentage of dwellings *(a)* are unfit and *(b)* meet the decent homes standard. [201796]

Keith Hill: Local authorities' estimates of the number of dwellings they own and that *(a)* are unfit and *(b)* meet the Decent Homes Standard have been made available in the Library of the House.

These figures are based on information provided by local authorities in the "Local Authority Housing Revenue Account Statistical Appendices—2004".

It should be noted that homes may meet the Fitness Standard but not the Decent Homes Standard.

To meet the Decent Homes Standard a home must meet the Fitness Standard, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Local Government

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) under what provisions the retrospective switch in grant from North Yorkshire county council to London boroughs, Metropolitan boroughs and urban unitary authorities is being made; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the grant switch on the level of council tax raised by county councils for 2005–06; [203674]

(2) what guidance he will issue to county councils on transferring resources which have already been committed; [203675]

(3) if he will give an assurance to county councils that future budgetary resources and grants will not be diverted. [203676]

Mr. Raynsford: Amending Reports are made under section 84A of, and paragraph 13 of Schedule 8 to, the Local Government Finance Act 1988 ("the 1988 Act"). Section 84A of the 1988 Act was inserted by section 104 of, and paragraph 15 of Schedule 10 to, the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Paragraph 13 of Schedule 8 to the 1988 Act was substituted by section 104 of, and paragraph 7 of Schedule 10 to, the 1992 Act.

The Amending Report for 2003–04 calculates the amount of grant each authority would have received had the revised mid-year population estimates published by the Office of National Statistics on 9 September 2004 been available at the time of the 2003–04 Settlement.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has always been clear that we would issue an amending report for the 2003–04 settlement to incorporate the revised 2001 population estimates. It is only fair that authorities should receive the correct amount of grant relative to the updated population estimates. Indeed we consulted on options for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 amending reports over the summer.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister appreciates that it is not possible for authorities like North Yorkshire county council to reopen their budgets for 2003–04. For this reason we will pay, or recover, any changes in 2003–04 grant amounts during 2005–06; and we have amended the floor damping scheme for 2005–06 to ensure that all authorities should receive at least the floor increase in their formula grant after paying back any money owed under the 2003–04 Amending Report.

It was announced on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 101WS that we would postpone making the 2004–05 Amending Report until next year in order to ensure that all possible revisions to the data used in the 2004–05 settlement will be included.

The Government announced its proposals for the local government settlement on 2 December. This ensures that all authorities will receive an above inflation grant increase for the third year running. Given this substantial investment in local government, the Government expects to see significantly lower council tax increases next year and expects the average council tax increase in England in 2005–06 to be less than 5 per cent. It is prepared to take even tougher capping action in 2005–06 than it did this year. This applies to all authorities, including fire and police authorities.

High council tax increases are a thing of the past. The Government will not tolerate excessive council tax increases either next year or in years to come.

Local Government Ombudsman

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which body is responsible for dealing with complaints of maladministration against the local government ombudsman. [203636]

Mr. Raynsford: The Local Government Act 1974 sets out the procedures which the Commission for Local Administration in England (the local government ombudsman) must follow in carrying out his investigations. Anyone who has a concern about the outcome of their complaint to the ombudsman, or the manner in which their complaint has been dealt with by the ombudsman's staff, can contact the ombudsman's office. The matter will then be considered by a senior member of staff, usually the deputy ombudsman. If the concern is about the actions of the ombudsman himself then the matter would be considered by the ombudsman. If he is unable to satisfy the concern raised, then the complainant can pursue in the courts an allegation of failure to carry out an investigation in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment for the Kensington New Deal for Communities area and the Elm Park neighbourhood of Liverpool will be published; and if he will make a copy available in the Library. [203645]

Phil Hope: The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 introduced greater flexibility for all local authorities in tackling private sector housing renewal. It also removed the need for the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, to approve the declaration of renewal areas. It is understood that the neighbourhood renewal assessments for Kensington including Elm Park are under consideration by Liverpool city council. Information on this is available on the council's website.

Pay Bargaining Unit

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many times the appraisal system for each pay bargaining unit in his Department has been changed in the last five years; and how many staff are fully or partly employed in connection with pay negotiations in each pay bargaining unit, broken down by grade. [200344]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was established in May 2002 following Machinery of Government changes. The information on *(a)* the changing of appraisal systems and *(b)* the numbers and grades of staff in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's bargaining units directly involved in annual pay negotiations, is set out as follows. It should be noted that pay negotiation forms only part of wider responsibilities of the teams.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

(a) None.

(b) One Senior Civil Service equivalent, Grade 7 and two HEOs.

The Planning Inspectorate

(a) Once.

(b) One Senior Civil Service equivalent, Grade 7, HEO and EO.

Fire Service College

(a) Once

(b) One Senior Civil Service equivalent, Grade 7 and HEO.

QEII Conference Centre

(a) Twice.

(b) The Centre's Chief Executive, a member of the Senior Civil Service and G7 equivalent.

Government Offices

(a) Once.

(b) One Senior Civil Service equivalent, Grade 7 and HEO.

Rural Housing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to make an announcement on the exceptions policy for rural housing; and for what reasons an announcement has not yet been made. [203104]

Keith Hill: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published her Department's five year strategy "Delivering the essentials of life" on 8 December 2004. The strategy signals that the rural exception policy will be retained.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's consultation paper 'Influencing the size, type and affordability of housing' published last year proposed to replace the rural exception policy with an allocation policy, which would enable local planning authorities to allocate sites solely for affordable housing. In the light of the consultation responses, we now intend to revise policy to enable local planning authorities to allocate sites in rural areas in plans, but also to take advantage of windfall sites through a continuing rural exception approach. We will make this change in the update to Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing", which will be published early in the new year.

Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department has spent on acquiring shredding equipment for office use in each year since 1997. [202097]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's procurement is devolved and such items of low value are purchased direct by end users. This level of detail on procurement is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Sport and Recreation

Kate Hoey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list local authorities with strategies for sport and recreation. [201819]

Phil Hope: Local authorities produced non-statutory Cultural Strategies between 2000–01 and 2003–04 that covered planning for sports and recreation, as well as

other cultural services. A list of authorities that produced these plans can be found on the Best Value Performance Indicator website: www.bvpi.gov.uk

As part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's process of rationalising plan requirements, we are encouraging local authorities to subsume Cultural Strategies within their statutory Community Strategies. *Guidance entitled "Living the Good Life" on how this* process could happen has been published.

Students

Mr. Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what plans he has to consult local communities affected by the concentration of high student numbers in his study into managing good practice in the provision of student accommodation; and if he will make a statement; [203404]

(2) what groups he has invited to participate in the study of managing housing good practice in the provision of student accommodation in areas of high concentration of students; [203405]

(3) when he proposes to establish the study funded by his Department into best practice on dealing with the problems associated with areas of high student numbers in accommodation. [204023]

Keith Hill: A joint project has been set in hand by Universities UK (UK) and the Local Government Association (LGA) with funding from the Department for Education and Skills. This follows concern over the impact on local communities of an expanding student population.

The project is due to result in a publication in spring 2005, and will be divided into two parts, the first looking at the reasons, scale, nature and context of some of the problems associated with large numbers of students in the community. The second part will focus on good practice and will give examples of effective co-operation between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and local authorities and other partnerships in the community.

As part of this project, researchers will survey universities in the UK and use the responses as the basis for further inquiries, in the form of interviews, which will involve a wide selection of stakeholders, including community interests.

Timber

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the refurbishment projects that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months in (i) his Office and (ii) each agency of his Office; what steps are being taken to ensure that timber will be procured from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site comes from legal and sustainable sources. [201025]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister presently has the following refurbishment projects:

		Project
(a)	*In progress*	
(i)	In the office	None
(ii)	In each agency of the office	None.
(iii)	In the Government office network	Government Office East Midlands—space planning/reorganisation project
(b)	*Will start in the next six months*	
(i)	In the office	Eland House, London—space planning/reorganisation project on the 5th, 8th and 9th floors
(ii)	In each agency of the office	None
(iii)	In the Government office network	None

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has defined refurbishment projects to be upgrading and efficiency projects exceeding £100,000.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently updating all its Procurement Terms and Conditions in line with a number of recent and forthcoming changes and appropriate clauses with respect environmental considerations will be included. Contracts where the use of timber and timber based products is anticipated, contain clauses that require the supplier to actively seek legally sourced and sustainable timber and to supply physical evidence that supports this. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has the use of framework contracts for the purchase of furniture, which are subject to supply chain audits by officials.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is presently co-operating with the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs and other Government Departments in the creation of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET), and has agreed to provide funding to support the initiative.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Upward Only Rent Review

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will respond to the consultation on upward only rent review, which closed in September. [204814]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will make a decision on whether or not to legislate against upward only rent review clauses when we have studied the final report from Reading university on the impact of the property industry's voluntary Code of Practice for Commercial Leases. This report is due at the end of this month, alongside the responses to the consultation paper.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will make an announcement of our conclusions in due course, but there are complex issues at stake and it is important that we consider all the evidence fully before making a

decision. It would not be appropriate at present to indicate a specific timetable, but we would hope to reach conclusions in the first half of 2005.

Video Conferencing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* his Office and *(b)* each agency of his Office; what percentage of offices have these facilities; and what plans there are to increase the number. [201026]

Phil Hope: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has access to 13 video conferencing units in 10 of the 11 buildings occupied by his staff, one of these units is managed by another Government Department.

(b) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's agencies have three video conferencing units, one in each of its three occupancies, one of these units is managed by another Government Department.

(c) The Government Offices have 19 video conferencing units in 12 of its 13 buildings. 93 per cent. of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's occupancies have access to video conferencing facilities.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its agencies regularly review the requirement for video conferencing equipment, with each proposal being considered on a value for money basis. The Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh has plans in place for the installation of a second video conferencing unit, which will be operational in February 2005.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

CABINET OFFICE

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the Office's policy is towards age discrimination. [202321]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office, Central Office of Information and the Government Car and Despatch Agency all have a commitment not to discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age and this is set out clearly in the relevant equal opportunities policies. It is each organisation's policy that everyone should have equality of opportunity on the basis of their ability and suitability for the work.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the Duchy's policy is towards age discrimination. [202481]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has an equal opportunities policy and does not discriminate in respect of age.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will make it her policy to disclose prior to the first week of May 2005 her Department's estimate of the overall cost within its existing budget of the creation and maintenance of a separate Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. [201875]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: Departmental Annual Reports and Resource Accounts are published in accordance with Her Majesty's Treasury guidance.

Civil Service Sports Council

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, by what mechanisms land belonging to the Civil Service was transferred to the freehold ownership of the Civil Service Sports Council. [202057]

Ruth Kelly: Available records show that the freeholds of those lands and buildings belonging to various civil service departments which have been purchased by the Civil Service Sports Council were on the basis of open market value.

Acquisition and disposal of such assets are a matter purely for the Civil Service Sports Council and its members.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what her estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) the Office, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which she has responsibility in each of the last two years. [202313]

Ruth Kelly: None of the properties owned by the Cabinet Office, its agencies and other public bodies for which the Cabinet Office is responsible were vacant in 2002–03 or in 2003–04.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by the Duchy in each of the last two years; [202389]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* PFI projects in the Duchy offices for each of the last two years. [202471]

(3) what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by the Duchy in each of the last two years. [202474]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster owns a wide portfolio of investment properties which have voids due to periods for re-letting, repairs or refurbishment. The Duchy Office at 1 Lancaster Place is the only building occupied for administrative purposes. This building is currently being refurbished from Duchy funds with a view to rationalising the space occupied and sub-letting surplus areas, as part of the investment activities of the Duchy. To provide figures at present would be inappropriate as they are commercially sensitive.

The Duchy of Lancaster has not undertaken any PFI contracts.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the *(a)* conferences,

(b) seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by the Duchy and which took place on non-Duchy premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202485]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has not held any conferences, seminars, workshops, exhibitions or press conferences.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by the Office in each of the last two years. [202316]

Ruth Kelly: Since April 2002, canteen facilities at the Cabinet Office's core London buildings have been provided on a nil subsidy basis by the Department's total facilities management provider. To identify separately the cost of running the canteen service from other hospitality services also provided would incur disproportionate costs.

For 2002–03 and 2003–04, the Government Car and Despatch Agency, an Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office, incurred expenditure of £35,000 per annum for the running of a canteen facility at its London Headquarters site.

For the remainder of the Cabinet Office estate, either no such expenditure was incurred or figures can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost has been of criminal damage to the Office's buildings in each of the last two years. [202317]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested is shown in the table.

	Cost of Criminal Damage (£000)
2002–03	500
2003–04	4,300

There has been no lasting damage done to the fabric of any of the Department's buildings.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what crèche facilities are provided by the Office; and at what cost. [202320]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office has a nursery at the Civil Service College in Sunningdale which is run in partnership with the Edith Rose Day Nursery. The cost is subsidised for staff. Eligible staff in all locations can apply for childcare vouchers.

Staff in Central London working for the Cabinet Office and the Central Office of Information have access during the school holidays to the Westminster Holiday Playscheme. The cost is subsidised for staff.

A table showing the cost of childcare provision is shown.

Department	*Type of childcare provision*	*Cost to the Department (£000)*
Cabinet Office	Nursery, Sunningdale	[1]13,779
	Westminster Holiday Playscheme	[2]1,638
	Childcare Vouchers	[3]7,000
Central Office of Information	Westminster Holiday Playscheme	[4]360

[1] (for the year 2003 to 2004)
[2] (for the year 2003 to 2004)
[3] (on average per month)
[4] (for the year 2003 to 2004)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cost of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department for staff in each of the last two years. [202476]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has no in-house catering facilities but does have access to catering facilities at the adjoining Institution of Electrical Engineers. Senior staff (five) are subsidised at £2 per meal while support staff (12) are subsidised at £3 per meal. This facility is only used in a very limited manner and the cost is minimal.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202477]

Mr. Milburn: There is no record of criminal damage to the Duchy of Lancaster office.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what the total external spending by the Duchy on private finance initiative consultants was in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by the Duchy over this period; and if he will make a statement; [202478]

(2) what the total external spending by the Duchy was on public-private partnership consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by the Duchy over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202486]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has not been involved in any Private Finance Initiative or Public Private Partnership projects.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what crèche facilities are provided by the Duchy for its administrative staff; and at what cost. [202480]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has no crèche facilities and within the staff no-one has requested such facilities or support to be made available. Such childcare needs are regularly monitored by the Chief Executive. The Duchy of Lancaster adopts a flexible approach to any requests for variations to standard working hours to enable parents to organise childcare support.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total cost to the Office was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202507]

Ruth Kelly: Expenditure on accountancy services is not separately identifiable on the Department's accounting system and therefore the information requested cannot be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202404]

Mr. Milburn: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Ministers official spokesman regularly provides details of Minister's public engagements.

Equal Pay

John McDonnell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether the most recent equal pay review included comparisons of *(a)* ethnic groups, *(b)* disabled and able-bodied and *(c)* part-time and full-time employees; and what differences of pay at each grade, band or salary range, broken down by (i) London and (ii) national rates were found. [200587]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office, Central Office of Information and Government Car and Despatch Agency all operate their own delegated pay systems and therefore completed individual equal pay audits in 2003. Copies of the action plans and supporting analysis will be placed today in the Library.

The approach and level of detail varied reflecting the size of the organisation and the issues they needed to address. Where comparisons were made no significant differences or trends were identified on ethnicity, staff with disabilities and working pattern.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment she has made of the gender pay gap amongst staff in the Office. [202322]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office, Central Office of Information and Government Car and Despatch Agency all operate their own delegated pay systems and therefore completed individual equal pay audits in 2003. Copies of the audits are available in the Library. None of them identified significant differences in salary levels between men and women.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap amongst staff in the Duchy. [202482]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has a policy of awarding pay to staff on the basis of ability regardless of gender.

IT Contracts

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the *(a)* projected cost at the time of tender and *(b)* actual cost at the time of completion was for each IT contract commissioned by the Office in the last five years. [201617]

Ruth Kelly: Information relating to tender and completion costs for IT contracts is not held centrally and is not separately identifiable on the Department's accounting system. It cannot therefore be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Public Engagements

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for which of the five public engagements listed in his Answer of 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 252W, on public engagements, texts or transcripts of his presentations are publicly available. [204098]

Mr. Milburn: A Transcript of the speech I gave on 9 November 2004 to the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) is available on the IPPR website www.ippr.org.uk

Transcripts of the speeches I gave on the 23 November 2004, at the Guardian Public Services Awards, and on the 30 November 2004 at the Association of Chief Executive of Voluntary Organisations, are available on the Cabinet office website www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk"

Copies of these speeches have today been placed in the Library.

Security Vetting

Llew Smith: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether *(a)* spouses and *(b)* other partners of Cabinet Ministers are subject to security vetting. [202812]

Ruth Kelly: It has been a policy of successive Governments that Ministers of the Crown, and by extension their spouses or partners, are not subject to security vetting.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many complaints were made by her office's civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203481]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Sustainable Timber

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will list the refurbishment projects in her Department that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that timber for these projects will be procured from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment comes from legal and sustainable sources. [201072]

Ruth Kelly: There are no refurbishment projects currently in progress and none are planned to start in the next six months. The model Contract Specification Clause for timber procurement is used in all appropriate Cabinet Office contracts.

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Illness

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS of treating medical conditions deemed to be linked to the use of alcohol was in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [199614]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The cost of national health service treating medical conditions deemed to be linked to the use of alcohol is not routinely collected.

In September 2003, the Prime Minister's strategy unit published the interim analytical report. This report calculated the cost to the NHS of alcohol misuse to be up to £1.7 billion per annum but this estimate was not restricted to the cost of treatment of medical conditions linked to the use of alcohol.

Ambulance Services (Gloucestershire)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what improvements in ambulance services in Gloucestershire have taken place since 1997. [203245]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since 1997, there have been many improvements to ambulance services within Gloucestershire. Some of the key achievements include:

New investment into the Gloucestershire Ambulance Service NHS Trust of just under £1 million.

Improving category "A" eight-minute response standard from 49.7 per cent. in 1997 to 73.5 per cent. in 2003–04 (the standard is 75 per cent. within eight minutes). This has been achieved despite a 100 per cent. rise in activity.

Maintaining a category "A" 19 minute response of 96 per cent. against a 95 per cent. standard.

The addition of four ambulances and five response cars to assist with national targets.

Increases in staffing levels from 180 front line staff to 210.

Replacing a third of the accident and emergency vehicles in 2003–04. As a result, the trust now has a fleet of vehicles less than six-years-old.

Recent investment in a new ambulance base at a cost of £1.7 million.

Atypical Anti-psychotic Drugs

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the increase in prescribing of atypical anti-psychotic drugs as a proportion of anti-psychotics since the publication of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance recommending atypicals is in line with his forecasts and targets. [203197]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not made any forecasts or set targets relating to atypical anti-psychotics.

Responsibility for implementing guidance published by National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is devolved within the national health service to local trusts, supported and performance managed by strategic health authorities. Since January 2002, the NHS has had three months from the date of publication of each technology appraisal guidance to provide funding so that clinical decisions made by doctors involving NICE recommended treatments or drugs can be funded.

Barnet Chase Farm Hospital Trust

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the Barnet Chase Farm Hospital Trust communications strategy. [204097]

Dr. Ladyman: Communications is a responsibility for the local national health service trust. However, I understand that the trust agreed a communications strategy in 2003. That strategy encompasses internal and external communications and thus covers communications with staff, patients and the public and key opinion formers or "stakeholders" which include right hon. and hon. Members.

Bedfordshire Heartlands PCT

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on *(a)* the financial situation of and *(b)* the future prospects for Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust. [204332]

Dr. Ladyman: The annual accounts for 2003–04 for Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust (PCT) show an overall deficit of £3 million. Information provided by the PCT shows it is forecasting a year end deficit in 2004–05 of £9.7 million.

Overspends in national health service organisations have to be paid for from within the overall NHS budget. The strategic health authority and Bedfordshire Heartlands PCT are working closely to ensure that the PCT reaches a sustainable financial position, while maintaining an appropriate and affordable level of health care for the local community. The impact and handling of any deficit will be looked at as part of this process.

While we expect overall financial balance across the NHS, this is not to say that there are no health bodies facing financial pressures. There are always pressures to be managed in year and substantial moneys have been allocated to the NHS to meet the increasing demands placed on it.

Cancer Care

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will adjust cancer targets to indicate quality of life and managed death indicators. [202234]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework, 2005–06 to 2007–08, "National Standards, Local Action", sets a national target on patient/user experience: to secure sustained national improvements in national health service patient experience by 2008, ensuring that individuals are fully involved in decisions about their health care, including choice of provider, as measured by independently validated surveys.

The Government recognises that, although most people would prefer to remain at home rather than go into a hospice or hospital, only about 25 per cent. of cancer patients achieve a home death. We are supporting strategies that enable more patients to exercise choice in where they are cared for and die and funding specific initiatives in this area, including a £12 million investment over three years in the end of life care programme and a £6 million investment in integrated cancer care pilots. Both initiatives will enable more people to die in the place of their choice. The national cancer patient survey, conducted in 2000 prior to the launch of the NHS Cancer Plan, surveyed cancer patients' experience of care. The National Audit Office is presently undertaking a survey, "Tackling Cancer: Improving the Patient Journey", due to report in 2005, which will chart progress since 2000.

Carers (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many carers there are in Pendle. [200992]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data on the number of unpaid carers is available from the 2001 Census—Table S025 Sex and Age by General Health and Provision of Unpaid Care—which is available from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Advice on information for particular smaller areas is available by contacting the ONS at census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk.

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been invested in paediatric services at the Cheltenham General Hospital since 1997. [203243]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

Between 2003–04 and 2005–06, Cotswold and Vale PCT, which commissions services from the Gloucestershire Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust, which is in turn responsible for the Cheltenham General Hospital, will receive an increase in its allocation of £42.2 million, equivalent to 28.87 per cent., for health care services, which includes paediatric services.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional ambulance services will be available to transport child patients to the Gloucester Royal Hospital if proposals to transfer dedicated round-the-clock children's services at the Cheltenham General Hospital go ahead. [203244]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Following the "Shifting the Balance of Power" initiative, responsibility for local services now lies with the local national health service. It is now for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with other NHS organisations in their area, to determine how best to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services, based on the specialised knowledge they have of the local community.

However, I am informed that the Gloucestershire Ambulance Service NHS Trust has had extensive dialogue with the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in regard to the impact of the local review of children's services. Some of the proposed developments will be introduced regardless of what changes, if any, are introduced as a result of the children's services review. Areas concerned are as follows:

> In order to ensure that children receive prompt appropriate treatment for their condition, they will be assessed by ambulance service clinicians and transported to the most appropriate treatment centre. All ambulance service clinicians have recently received additional training for the treatment of children and the trust has invested in new equipment appropriate to the needs of children.
>
> The Gloucestershire Ambulance Service NHS Trust is working with the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to improve the equipment provided for neonates. This will include the procurement of a new incubator, which will meet the new British Standard regulations.
>
> At least one new ambulance will be purchased and staffed 365 days a year to facilitate the transfer of children, should the need arise. In addition to this, the utilisation of all ambulances will be improved.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children have been treated at the Battledown Ward of Cheltenham General Hospital in each year since 1997. [203246]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Childhood Anaemia

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to encourage the iron intake of children to prevent childhood anaemia; and what assessment he has made of the incidence of childhood anaemia in the last 20 years. [202230]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government are committed to improve children's diet and health and action will be taken forward through the Government's recently published White Paper, "Choosing Health". Most people are able to meet their nutritional needs by eating a balanced, varied diet, including plenty of fruit and vegetables. Vulnerable children from families in receipt of the Welfare Food Scheme are provided with supplements including vitamin A, C and D. Vitamin C in particular aids the absorption of iron from the diet. Iron supplements may also be prescribed to children with iron deficiency anaemia that does not improve with appropriate dietary advice.

The Department and the Foods Standards Agency undertake regular surveys to monitor the diet and health of children. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey 2000 showed that, according to the World Health Organisation criteria based on blood haemoglobin levels, three per cent., of boys aged four to six years were anaemic, compared to one per cent., for those aged seven to eighteen years. For girls, eight per cent. of those aged four to six years, four per cent. aged seven to ten years and nine per cent. aged 15–18 years were anaemic.

Childhood Spinal Deformity

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on the review of

services for children with scoliosis and spinal deformity; when he expects this work to be completed; and how the recommendations of this review will be taken forward. [203193]

Dr. Ladyman: This review, which has wide stakeholder representation, is being led by the London specialised commissioning group. It produced its first report in May 2004. The review group is now doing some detailed work on clinical guidelines, a framework for commissioning services, workforce issues and patient information. This is due to be completed in the next year and the London specialised commissioning group will be taking its recommendations forward in partnership with all the other specialised commissioning groups throughout England.

As part of the implementation of the children's national service framework, we also propose to publish an exemplar on a child with a spinal deformity early in 2005.

Communication Masts (Health Effects)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has commissioned on the cumulative effects of multiple mobile phone/Tetra masts on the health of people living nearby. [203199]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The mobile telecommunications and health research programme supports about 30 studies of the potential effects of mobile phone telecommunications. Many of these are generic and accordingly relevant to TETRA. Some studies include a specific examination of the effects of TETRA. The programme is described on the web site www.mthr.org.uk. An associated programme, specifically on TETRA, is being funded by the Home Office www.policereform.gov.uk/implementation/tetra/index.html. In general, the studies are concerned mainly with mobile phones rather than base stations (masts) because the public exposure from base station emissions is very much lower than the international guidelines.

The public health implications of mobile phones base stations were reviewed recently in a report by the National Radiological Protection Board's advisory group on non-ionising radiation (AGNIR). The report, entitled "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic fields", (Documents of the NRPB, Vol 14, No2, 2003) concluded that "Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health" www.nrpb.org. In 2001, at the request of the Home Office, AGNIR reported on TETRA and concluded that "current evidence suggests that it is unlikely that the special features of the signals from TETRA mobile terminals and repeaters pose a hazard to health" (Documents of the NRPB, Vol 12, No 2, 2001).

The Department supports the World Health Organisation's electromagnetic fields project, which is currently reviewing worldwide research and is due to publish a health risk assessment of radiofrequency effects in 2007. This will be available on the WHO'S website at www.who.int/peh-emf.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [200792]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Costs for the provision of energy to the Department's main London estate for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are shown in the table.

£

	2002–03	2003–04
Gas	108,675	106,278
Electricity	627,137	658,347
Oil	3,712	811

The other main departmental building, situated in Leeds, is managed by Land Securities Trillium on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. The Department of Health pays an annual charge for energy for its occupation, as shown in the table.

	Gas and electricity (£)
2002–03	267,997
2003–04	256,000

Dermatology Treatment

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the (*a*) average and (*b*) maximum time was that a patient waited for a first dermatology outpatient appointment in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement [203060]

Dr. Ladyman: The data held centrally are shown in the tables.

Average waiting time from general practitioner (GP) referral to first dermatology outpatient appointment.

Quarter	Median (weeks)
Q3 2003–04	8.04
Q4 2003–04	7.51
Q1 2004–05	6.98
Q2 2004–05	7.51

Maximum waiting time from GP referral to first dermatology outpatient appointment

Quarter	Not seen within 13 weeks or more	Not seen within 17 weeks or more	Not seen within 21 weeks or more	Not seen within 26 weeks or more
Q3 2003–04	11,559	2,185	1,377	174
Q4 2003–04	2,521	13	1,069	217
Q1 2004–05	5,601	20	286	[1]—
Q2 2004–05	8,042	20	123	[1]—

[1] Not collected.

Source:
Department of Health QM08R Commissioner Based

Diabetes

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of NHS organisations in implementing the National

Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance technology appraisal, published in May 2003, on patient education models on diabetes. [203612]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) technology appraisal on the use of patient-education models for diabetes is due to be reviewed in February 2006. The diabetes dataset currently being developed will include the type of structured education offered, the date it was offered, and the date it was received.

The diabetes national service framework (NSF) and the NICE technology appraisal of patient-education models for diabetes make it clear that primary care trusts should offer structured education programmes to people with diabetes from the point of diagnosis.

Two national structured education programmes for people with diabetes are currently being rolled-out. These are DAFNE (dose adjustment for normal eating) for Type 1 and DESMOND (diabetes education and self-management for ongoing and newly diagnosed) for Type 2.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many people inject Insulin daily for the treatment of their diabetes; and what proportion of these people inject animal insulin. [203614]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on the numbers of people who inject Insulin are not available. However, the table shows the number and net cost of insulin prescription items that were dispensed in the community in England and the proportion of these derived from animals, up to September 2004.

Number of prescription items and net ingredient cost of Insulins that were dispensed in the community in England, year to September 2004

Number of	Number of prescription items (£000s)	Percentage of total items	Net ingredient cost (£000s)	Percentage of total net ingredient cost
Highly purified animal	166.4	4.0	5,703.5	3.0
Human sequence (GM Insulin)	3,951.3	96.0	183,540.6	97.0
All Insulins	4,117.8	100.0	189,244.1	100.0

Notes:

1. The data is from the Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) system which covers all prescription items that are dispensed in the community in England. This does not include drugs dispensed in hospitals or private prescriptions.
2. Insulins are those defined in the British National Formulary (BNF) paragraph 6.1.1, "Insulins". Insulin drugs have been grouped into highly purified animal and human sequence (GM) insulin in line with the British National Formulary (BNF)
3. Doctors write prescriptions on a prescription form. Each single item written on the form is counted as a prescription item. The net ingredient cost refers to the cost (which the dispenser is reimbursed) of the drug before discounts and does not include any dispensing costs or fees.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proportion of primary care general practices have a diabetes clinic attached to them. [203616]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not centrally available.

Various models of diabetes care have been established, following publication of the national service framework for diabetes. We are encouraging diabetes networks to agree a model of care that crosses organisational boundaries.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many diabetes datasets defining minimum standards have NHS Information Standards Board approval. [203626]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The diabetes summary core dataset was given national health service information standards board (ISB) approval in March 2003. This dataset was developed to support implementation of the national diabetes audit, rolled out in 2004.

A wider continuing care reference dataset will be submitted to the ISB for approval as a national standard in January 2005.

Specialist extension datasets to support paediatric care, eye care (and national retinal screening) and foot care have been developed and will be submitted to the ISB for national approval within the next year.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in Coventry are on waiting lists for digital hearing aids. [203585]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

We have invested £94 million over two years, which will be used to make digital hearing aids available across England by April 2005.

Draft Mental Health Bill

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the code of practice to accompany the draft Mental Health Bill. [203185]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The draft Mental Health Bill requires the appropriate authority, for example, the Secretary of State for Health, to publish a code of practice. The code of practice cannot be laid before Parliament until the Bill has been enacted. However, we plan to publish a first draft of the code of practice when the Mental Health Bill is introduced into Parliament.

Employment Advisers

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the cost of the commitment to provide access to an employment adviser for everyone with severe mental health problems made in the Choosing Health White Paper. [202273]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Social Exclusion Unit's recent report on social exclusion and mental health, copies of which are available in the Library, provides examples where the implementation of individual placement and support approach, which integrates an employment adviser within each clinical team and moves towards providing employment advice for all service users who express a desire to return to work, has proved cost neutral or cost saving. To support the commitment to work towards proving access to an

employment advisor for everyone with severe mental health problems, £140 million has been invested in vocational and day services.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of *(a)* the availability of employment advice and Individual Placement Support to people with severe mental health problems, *(b)* the demand for access to employment advice for people with severe mental health problems and *(c)* the number of people with severe mental health problems who do not have access to an employment adviser. [202274]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Detailed information about the importance for people with mental health problems of employment advice and of individual placement support can be found in the in the social exclusion unit's recent report on social inclusion and mental health (ISBN: 1851127178) available in the Library, which sets out the evidence base. Although this approach has not been implemented across the country, there are a number of mental health provider trusts which are delivering this form of vocational rehabilitation with encouraging results.

There is information relating to demand contained in the 2004 patient survey results published by the Healthcare Commission. Of the service users who felt they needed and would like help to find work, 53 per cent., said they had not received any. This is why the Government have invested £140 million in vocational and day services for people with severe mental health problems. This will be used to implement the international evidence on what works, while providing a range of services to meet different needs.

Employment Terms and Conditions

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what initiatives are being assessed by the Government to achieve the aim of improving the quality of jobs by reducing monotony, increasing job control and applying appropriate human resources practices and policies, referred to in the Choosing Health White Paper. [202272]

Jane Kennedy: I have been asked to reply.

The Health and Safety Executive has worked closely with its partners to develop Stress Management Standards are designed to help organisations identify effective and locally applicable solutions to manage work-related stress. The management standards encourage organisations to review periodically these solutions to ensure they have the desired outcome. The standards provide the yardstick by which organisations can gauge their performance in tackling a range of key stressors, including those associated with job design.

Expert Patients Programme

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) how many primary care trusts had completed all four pilot stage courses under the Expert Patients Programme on *(a)* 1 April and *(b)* 1 December; [203613]

(2) what the total cost to central funds has been of the Expert Patients Programme to date; and how much funding has been allocated to support the mainstreaming of the Expert Patients Programme across the NHS between 2004 and 2007; [203623]

(3) what plans he has to change the name of the Expert Patients Programme; [203627]

(4) how many primary care trusts are *(a)* running Expert Patients Programme courses and *(b)* committed to establishing Expert Patients Programme courses. [203628]

Miss Melanie Johnson: From current information available from survey returns, 167 primary care trusts (PCTs) are known to have completed four pilot courses by 1 June 2004 and 204 PCTS delivered four courses or more by 1 December 2004.

290 PCTs are currently engaged in either pilot or post-pilot course activity. 191 PCTs, out of 280 PCTS who responded to the survey, have courses arranged post pilot. On average this equates to 4.8 courses per PCT, an escalation of 2.3 courses per PCT compared with the previous year.

The total estimated cost to central funding to date amounts to £9 million, which includes support to the local implementation of the expert patients programme (EPP) through PCTs. Mainstreaming allocated funding for 2004–05 is £2 million. The allocation for 2005–07 is still under review.

There are currently no plans to change the name of the EEP but I understand the EPP strategic management board has discussed the need to find a name which fully reflects the scope of the programme and its commitment to supported self-management by people with long term conditions, but no recommendation has yet been made.

Eye Tests

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many senior citizens in Bolton, North-East have access to free eye tests. [203372]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures for the number of sight tests by constituency are not collected centrally.

The total number of sight tests paid for by Bolton Primary Care Trust in the year 2003–04 for people 'aged 60 and over' was 18,760. Sight tests cannot be equated to the numbers of patients.

Fireworks

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many firework-related callouts to the ambulance service there were in England in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2003. [204060]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally.

Fluoride

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding his Department provides to the British Fluoridation Society; and whether the society receives funding on a regular basis. [203362]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Successive governments have funded the British Fluoridation Society. Funding of £85,000 in 2003–04 and £87,000 in 2004–05 has been provided.

Food Labelling

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on his policy objectives for further discussion in the EU regarding legislation on *(a)* food supplements, *(b)* nutrition and health claims on food products and *(c)* sports nutrition products; [201983]

(2) if he will ensure that opportunities are provided under the UK's Presidency of the EU for discussions on legislation on *(a)* food supplements, *(b)* nutrition and health claims on food products and *(c)* sports nutrition products. [201984]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The policy objectives for this legislation are as follows:

The Food Supplements Directive was adopted in July 2002 and applies in member states from 1 August 2005. The Government must ensure that food supplements on sale after 1 August comply with the relevant legislation.

The Government's objective is to improve consumer protection from misleading and fraudulent nutrition and health claims on food, with proportionate measures that minimise new burdens on business.

The Government's policy in relation to proposals for European Union legislation on sports nutrition is to press for proportionate legislation, which protects public health and supports consumer choice.

All Departments will be concentrating efforts on progressing the agenda of Council work, which will include the nutrition and health claims proposal. It would not be appropriate for discussion on the food supplements directive to be considered as Council business during this period as the Directive was adopted in July 2002 and applies from 1 August 2005. The Commission is expected to produce a formal proposal on sports nutrition products, but it has yet to publish its 2005 work programme. It is therefore unclear at this stage whether this will be available for discussion during the United Kingdom Presidency.

Food Supplements

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the meetings with manufacturers, retailers and consumers of food supplements recently arranged by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health have resulted in further additions of nutrients and nutrient sources to the lists of permitted ingredients set out in the Annexes to the Food Supplements Directive and the appendices to the Food Supplements (England) Regulations; and whether he intends further to extend those lists prior to their coming into force in July 2005. [201280]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow) on 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column. 351–2W.

Foundation Hospitals

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Homerton University Hospital NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201145]

(2) how much the Homerton University Hospital NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201146]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Homerton University Hospital National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Andrew Windross, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Moorfield Eye Hospital NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201147]

(2) how much the Moorfield Eye Hospital NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201148]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Moorfields Eye Hospital National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Thomas Boyd-Carpenter, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary

from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Papworth Hospital NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201149]

(2) how much the Papworth Hospital NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201150]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Papworth Hospital National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to John Beadsmoore, chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust (now Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201151]

(2) how much the Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust (now Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201152]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the chair of Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Clive Morton, chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; and how much the trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of these elections; [201153]

(2) how much money the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust paid to outside bodies for help with *(a)* compiling its register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for (i) help in preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (ii) the conduct of these elections. [201154]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the chair of University Hospital Birmingham National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to John Charlton, chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; and how much the trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; [201155]

(2) how much money the Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital NHS Trust paid to outside bodies for help with *(a)* compiling its register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for (i) help in preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections. [201156]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the chair of Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to David Hooper, chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by

applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; and how much the Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; [201157]

(2) how much money the Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust paid to outside bodies for help with *(a)* compiling its register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for (i) help in preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections. [201158]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Bradford Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to John Ryan, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) how much the Addenbrooke's NHS Trust (now Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; and how much the Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; [201159]

(2) how much money the Addenbrooke's NHS Trust (now Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) paid to outside bodies for help with *(a)* compiling its register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for help in (i) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and how much the Trust spent on changing its name from Addenbrooke's NHS Trust to Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. [201160]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Cambridge University Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Dr. Mary Archer, Chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's enquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) how much the City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; and how much the Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; [201161]

(2) how much money the City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust paid to outside bodies for help with *(a)* compiling its register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for help *(a)* in preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections. [201162]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of City Hospitals Sunderland National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to David Graham, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's enquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) how much the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201163]

(2) how much the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of these elections; how much money the Trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of these elections. [201164]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of The Countess of Chester Hospital National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Susan Sellers, Chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's enquiry. The Department provides a centrally provided

programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Southern Derbyshire Acute Hospital Services NHS Trust (now Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201165]

(2) how much the Southern Derbyshire Acute Hospital Services NHS Trust (now Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of these elections; how much money the Trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201166]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Derby Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Peter Brewin, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's enquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201167]

(2) how much the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201168]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Margaret Cox, Chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201169]

(2) how much the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201170]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Gloucestershire Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Janet Trotter, Chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Guy's and St. Thomas's NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201171]

(2) how much the Guy's and St. Thomas's NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201172]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Patricia Moberly, Chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Peterborough Hospital NHS Trust spent on changing its name to Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. [201192]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Peterborough Hospitals National Health Service Trust. I have written to Clive Morton, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Southern Derbyshire Acute Hospital Services NHS Trust (now Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) spent on changing its name from Southern Derbyshire Acute Hospital Services NHS Trust to Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. [201193]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Derby Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Peter Brewin, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) how much the University College London Hospitals NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201212]

(2) how much the University College London Hospitals NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the Trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201225]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of University College London Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Peter Dixon, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's enquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) how much the Stockport NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201213]

(2) how much the Stockport NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the Trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201214]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Stockport National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Robina Shah, Chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's enquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) how much the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the Trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201215]

(2) how much the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the Trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the Trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201226]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to David Stone, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's enquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary

from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Royal Marsden NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201216]

(2) how much the Royal Marsden NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201217]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the chair of Royal Marsden National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Tessa Green, chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201218]

(2) how much the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201219]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the chair of Royal Devon and Exeter National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Ruth Hawker, chair, informing her of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust spent on preparing its application for foundation status; how much of this expenditure was paid to outside consultants; and how much the trust spent on preparing for foundation status after being given the go-ahead to do so; [201220]

(2) how much the Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust spent on *(a)* compiling the register of electors for governors and *(b)* the conduct of elections; how much money the trust paid to outside bodies for help with (i) compiling its register of electors for governors and (ii) the conduct of elections; and to which outside organisations the trust paid fees for help in (A) preparing electoral registers for elections for governors and (B) the conduct of elections. [201221]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Queen Victoria Hospital National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Hugh Ure, Chair, informing him of my right hon. Friend's inquiry.

The Department provides a centrally provided programme of support and direct financial support to applicants preparing for NHS foundation trust status. It does not, however, hold information on the level of resources or the way in which resources are used by applicants in preparing for foundation status, including for their governance arrangements, as it is for each trust to determine how resources are best spent. Costs vary from trust to trust, depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation and its state of readiness.

Funding

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public funding has been spent on heart disease and cancer care in Bolton, North-East in each of the last five years. [203373]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not held centrally. Allocations of funding for particular treatments are matters for the local primary care trust.

General Social Care Council

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what performance standard has been set for processing an application by the General Social Care Council; how long it has taken on average in the last period for which information is available; and if he will make a statement. [203067]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Genito-Urinary Medicine

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been referred to genito-urinary medicine clinics in each year since 1997; and what proportion were given an appointment within 48 hours. [199449]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics provide open access patient care and patients do not have to be referred to them. The number of attendances at GUM clinics between 1997 and 2003 are shown in the table. Waiting times information are not collected centrally for the years in question. Results from a recent survey of GUM waiting times, GUM waiting times audit: May 2004, are available from the Health Protection Agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk.

Total attendance at GUM clinics, by sex, England: 1997–2003

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
1997	443,344	525,498	968,842
1998	475,271	556,520	1,031,791
1999	496,017	572,879	1,068,896
2000	536,110	609,982	1,146,092
2001	604,189	681,153	1,285,342
2002	704,076	779,767	1,483,843
2003	969,934	1,076,914	2,046,848

Source:
Health Protection Agency-KC60 returns.

GP Surgeries

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been made available in each primary care trust area for upgrading or rebuilding general practitioner surgeries. [203120]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column. 1966W.

Greater Manchester Surgical Unit, Trafford

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the business case was presented for the Greater Manchester Surgical Unit, Trafford to *(a)* the board of the relevant strategic health authority and *(b)* the respective boards of the Greater Manchester primary care trust; and when that business case was approved by these bodies; [203289]

(2) what surgical procedures will be undertaken by the Greater Manchester Surgical Unit, Trafford. [203290]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The Greater Manchester surgical centre will make a notable improvement on waiting times and waiting lists in Manchester. A range of surgical procedures will be undertaken at the centre including primary knee and hip replacements and minor surgery.

Detailed information regarding the centre's business case is not held centrally. This information can be obtained from the Greater Manchester strategic health authority.

Health Services

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been made available for health services in Liverpool in each year since 1997. [203043]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Allocations to Liverpool health authority (HA) and successor primary care trusts (PCTs) 1996–97 to 2005–06

£ thousand

HA/PCT	*1996–97 allocation*[1]	*1997–98 allocation*[1]	*1998–99 allocation*[1]	*1999–2000 allocation*[1]	*2000–01 allocation*[1]
Liverpool HA	230,029	243,040	253,814	350,296	379,504
Central Liverpool PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
North Liverpool PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Liverpool PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

£ thousand

HA/PCT	*2001–02 allocation*[1]	*2002–03 allocation*[1]	*2003–04 allocation*[1]	*2004–05 allocation*[1]	*2005–06 allocation*[1]
Liverpool HA	410,236	453,913	n/a	n/a	n/a
Central Liverpool PCT	n/a	n/a	286,884	321,165	358,315
North Liverpool PCT	n/a	n/a	118,120	132,316	147,710
South Liverpool PCT	n/a	n/a	100,413	110,029	120,103

[1] 1999–2000 is the first year of unified allocations covering hospital and community health services (HCHS), prescribing and general medical service cash limited.

Note:
These figures are not comparable with those for previous years, which cover HCHS only.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished consultant episodes there were in the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital's Trust in each year since its formation. [202682]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne hospitals national health service trust. Count of finished consultant episodes (FCEs): 1998–99 to 2003–04

	FCEs
1998–99	155,082
1999–2000	159,890
2000–01	162,021
2001–02	166,674
2002–03	172,800
2003–04	174,095

Notes:
1. A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
Source:
Hospital episode statistics, Department of Health.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has evaluated on the introduction of a national campaign on sexual health as set out in the White Paper, Choosing Health, Cm 6374, paragraph 15. [199459]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A comprehensive review of research about sexual health campaigns, undertaken for the Department in 2002, analysed the benefits of a broad spectrum of public information campaigns. In the context of the White Paper, Choosing Health, this review is being updated to inform the development of the new campaign.

Hospital Infections

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital trusts in England recorded a reduction in hospital infections between 2003 and 2004. [200892]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information is not available for most healthcare associated infections, but data for methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) blood stream infections are routinely available as the number of cases in each acute national health service trust and as the number of cases per 1,000 bed days. A comparison of MRSA rates for April 2003 to March 2004 with MRSA rates for April 2002 to March 2003 showed that rates had fallen in 45 of 173 acute NHS trusts in England.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the MRSA cases reported in 2003–04 at Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Hospital Trust resulted in *(a)* death, *(b)* loss of physical ability or limbs and *(c)* enduring weeping wounds; and what the figures were in the previous two years. [202707]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* This information is not collected centrally.

Independent Treatment Centres

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many independent sector treatment centres have contacts with the NHS; and what assessment he has made of their impact on *(a)* patient care and *(b)* quality of life; [202575]

(2) whether there has been a reduction in NHS waiting lists in the areas in which independent sector treatment centres are operating; [202576]

(3) whether there has been a reduction in the number of NHS patients opting for private treatment in areas of the country where independent sector treatment centres are operating. [202577]

Mr. Hutton: Seven contracts for independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) have been signed. More are expected to be signed shortly and all will be subject to review of their outcomes. The additional 250,000 patients ISTCs will be treating each year by the end of 2005 will help improve the quality of life for patients who previously may have had to wait longer for treatment.

ISTCs have contributed to the 12 per cent., waiting list reductions over the past 12 months highlighted in the Chief Executive's report to the national health service (December 2004). Mobile magnetic resonance imaging units are also helping to speed up diagnosis and treatment for many patients.

Data on the number of patients opting to pay for private treatment is not available.

Influenza Vaccinations

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have received free influenza vaccinations in Bolton, North-East in 2004. [203364]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not held centrally.

Insulin

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to give Synthetic Insulin Tolerance Syndrome drug protection under orphan drug status; and if he will take steps to ensure there are adequate available supplies of animal insulin from British animals. [202715]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The decision on granting orphan designation rests with the European Commission, based on advice received from the Committee for Orphan Medicinal Products of the European Medicines Agency. The procedures established for sponsors to apply for orphan designation, and the criteria upon which a decision on orphan designation is based, are described in the European Parliament and the Council Regulation (EC) 141/2000 and the Commission Regulation (EC) 847/2000.

Adequate supplies of animal insulin are available from the two companies who currently supply the United Kingdom market.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will request the Committee on the Safety of Medicine to review its data on the application of insulin treatment for diabetic patients; and if he will list licensed manufacturers of human insulin; [202716]

(2) if he will list the ingredients in human insulin used to treat the symptoms of diabetes; and what steps are taken to ensure that diabetic patients injecting human insulin are advised of the likely side effects; [202717]

(3) how many reports were made to the Committee on the Safety of Medicines (CSM) about adverse drug reactions for the application of human insulin to diabetic sufferers in each of the last three years; how many human insulin drugs have been issued with a licence by the CSM; and if he will instruct the CSM to obtain all trial data on the effects of human insulins on diabetics. [203156]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All new United Kingdom drug applications, including insulins, are evaluated by the committee on safety of medicines (CSM), which advises the Licensing Authority as to whether a marketing authorisation should be granted. The European applications are evaluated by the committee for medicinal products for human use (CHMP) on behalf of the European Medicines Agency (EMEA). The applicant will include, in their submission, results of clinical trials conducted in the proposed indication for which the licence is sought. Therefore the data, including clinical trial data, on the effects of human insulins on diabetics is considered with each application. The CSM has kept the safety of human insulin under close review and considered the available data on a number of occasions.

Reports of "suspected" adverse drug reactions (ADRs) are collected by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and CSM through the spontaneous reporting scheme, the yellow card scheme. Approximately 20,000 reports of ADRs are reported to the MHRA/CSM through this scheme each year.

The table shows the total number of suspected ADR reports received via the yellow card scheme for human insulin in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

	Total number of reports received
2001	55
2002	59
2003	142

It is important to note that a report of an adverse reaction does not necessarily mean that it was caused by the drug. Many factors have to be taken into account in assessing causal relationships including temporal association, the possible contribution of concomitant medication and the underlying disease. Additionally, the use of medicines may vary between different age groups. Use of medicines in the elderly, for example, is higher than in other age groups and elderly patients are more likely to be using combinations of medicines. The number of reports received via the yellow card scheme does not directly equate to the number of people who suffer adverse reactions to drugs for a number of reasons as this scheme is associated with an unknown level of under-reporting.

The likely side effects of human insulin are listed in the patient information leaflet that accompanies the prescribed medicine.

The ingredient in human insulin used to treat the symptoms of diabetes is insulin. Other ingredients are to formulate the product and are: glycerol, phenol, metacresol, zinc chloride, sodium chloride, disodium phosphate dehydrate, sodium hydroxide, hydrochloric acid and water for injection.

The following companies manufacture human and/or recombinant insulins, which are authorised in the UK:

Abbott Laboratories Inc. (USA)

Aventis Pharma (Germany)

Eli Lilly (France)

Hoechst Marion Roussell (Germany)

Human Pharmaceutical Work Co. Ltd. (Hungary)

Laboratories Organon SA (France)

Novo Nordisk (Denmark, USA and France)

There are 213 individual marketing authorisations for human and/or recombinant insulins in the UK, of which 18 were authorised by the UK's MHRA. All other licences are European authorisations and were authorised by the European Commission, following assessment by the EMEA. The 18 licences authorised by the Medicines Control Agency/MHRA are all manufactured by Novo Nordisk in France.

Locum Doctors (North Yorkshire)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the use of locum doctors under the new out-of-hours arrangements for general practitioners in North Yorkshire. [202537]

Miss Melanie Johnson: North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic Health Authority estimates that around 20 per cent. of the out of hours general practitioner services provided by North Yorkshire emergency doctors is currently provided by locum doctors.

Mental Health

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether small businesses will be the subject of vexatious litigation arising from the proposal to challenge discrimination against people with mental health difficulties, referred to in the Choosing Health White Paper; and what discussions he has had with other Government Departments in making this assessment. [202826]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No assessment has been made of the risk of vexatious litigation arising from those wishing to challenge discrimination against people with mental health difficulties. The policies set out in "Choosing Health" were developed after wide ranging consultation and we will be working with key stakeholders in their planning and implementation.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MIND facilities in England have had their public funding reduced for 2004–05. [203189]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not centrally available. In accordance with our policy of shifting the balance of power, supported by other national policy documents such as the national service framework for mental health, primary care trusts in conjunction with their strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders are responsible for assessing local health needs, and planning the allocation of their resources accordingly.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many graduate mental health workers *(a)* were employed in 2004 and *(b)* need to be recruited in 2005–06 to meet Government targets. [203191]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The requested information is not yet available. Progress on the number of graduate primary care mental health workers employed in the

national health service will be available when the Durham adult mental health service mapping is finalised in May 2005.

Milk Token Scheme

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to include goats milk in the infant token scheme. [203016]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Expert advice from the committee on medical aspects of food policy is that goats' milk, like cows' milk, is low in iron, vitamins A and D and is also low in folic acid compared to human and cows' milk. Goats' milk is often perceived as being less allergenic than cows' milk, or else providing additional nourishment, although these claims have not been substantiated. Infant formulas and follow-on formulas based on goats' milk have not been approved for use in Europe and are not recommended by the Department.

Goats' milk may be given from the age of one year, so long as precautions against vitamin and mineral deficiencies are taken and due regard is paid to microbiological safety.

It is for these reasons that goats' milk is—excluded from the Welfare Food Scheme. Where a child has a diagnosed intolerance to cows' milk, a doctor may prescribe a suitable alternative. Prescriptions are, of course, free for children and those in receipt of income support.

Mumps

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he has issued about the efficacy of the MMR vaccination for preventing mumps after 10 years from the date of vaccination. [203210]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Advice is contained in the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) factsheet No. 1, originally issued in 1997 and stated the following:

> "There is very little evidence that immunity to measles, mumps, or rubella vaccines wanes with time. It is known that children will remain immune for at least 27 years against measles, 18 years against rubella and 14 years against mumps—in other words for the amount of time that the vaccines have been available. Even if individuals are not fully protected, the immune system will have some memory and be able to respond more quickly in the immunised than in those who have not been immunised. Immunised children with low levels of antibodies are likely to have a modified, less serious, illness. Long-term studies on the duration of protection are continuing."

The text of the factsheet is available at www.mmrthefacts.nhs.uk/resources/pdf/factsheets1–3.pdf.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have contracted mumps in each of the last five years; and how many were minors. [203211]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is in the public domain and available on the Health Protection Agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/mumps/data_reg_age.htm.

National Programme for IT

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the introduction of the National Programme for IT computer system into the NHS; [202951]

(2) what the estimated cost is of introducing the National Programme for IT into the NHS; and if he will make a statement; [202952]

(3) what choice users of the National Programme for IT in the NHS will have of software suppliers; and if he will make a statement; [202953]

(4) what use will be made of existing computer systems when the National Programme for IT system is introduced into the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [202954]

Mr. Hutton: The national programme for information technology (NPfIT) will over the next nine years, revolutionise the way health information is accessed and shared in the national health service. The NPfIT focuses on the developments that will make a significant difference to improving the patient experience and the delivery of treatment, care and services. It will connect more than 30,000 general practitioners and 270 acute, community and mental health NHS trusts in a single, secure national system, providing doctors and nurses with the right information in the right place at the right time, and allow patients much greater choice in how and where they receive their care. NPfIT is a key component of delivering the vision of a truly modern and patient-centred NHS.

NPfIT has four key deliverables: electronic appointment booking, an electronic care records service, electronic transfer of prescriptions and an underpinning IT infrastructure with sufficient connectivity and broadband capacity to support the critical national applications and local systems.

Under the NPfIT, an incremental approach is being adopted to building up any new applications or systems. This approach is intended to ensure that implementation is achievable and minimises disruption to the day-to-day business of the NHS. As a consequence the NPfITPs strategy underlines the importance of making best use of the existing asset base. NHS users, including general practitioners, will not be expected to change clinical systems while their current systems are compliant with the NHS care record service and continue to serve them well. We have repeatedly made it clear, in particular when speaking with general practitioners, and in written guidance, that practices may continue to use existing systems subject to their remaining compliant, and being able to deliver the required functionality, until the national programme's local service provider (LSP) is able to implement a viable alternative system. LSPs are required to provide a choice of GP system as part of their service offering.

The NPfIT was planned and is being delivered, within expenditure assumptions set in line with the recommendations of the 2002 Wanless Report 'Securing our Future Health'. Wanless anticipated an increase in the level of spending on NHS information and communications technology, rising to around 4 per cent of the total NHS budget on NHS IT in general by

2008. The Government is committed to seeing this target, which extends beyond just the NPfIT national clinical systems, achieved. The costs of the procurement contracts let for the programme's four core components amount to £6.2 billion over 10 years. This figure relate to contractual commitments and covers ongoing funding of core deliverables and the connection of existing systems to national applications from central budgets. It does not include costs of training NHS staff or local change management costs, which will be borne by individual NHS organisations. Future funding to the NHS, determined by the next and future expenditure settlements, is expected to support trusts in meeting and sustaining the 4 per cent. target.

NHS Cleaners

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cleaners, as distinct from other ancillary staff, are employed by *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* private contractors providing services to the NHS. [199948]

Mr. Hutton: The latest available figure for staff who undertake cleaning in the national health service is 55,000 for 2003–04. This figure represents the headcount of both directly employed and contracted out cleaning staff. It excludes managers, administrative and supervisory staff who do not physically carry out cleaning functions.

NHS Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what expenditure is planned for the NHS in each financial year from 2005–06 to 2007–08. [202734]

Mr. Hutton: The following table shows planned total net national health service expenditure in England for the period 2005–06 to 2007–08.

£ billion

	Planned total net NHS expenditure[1]
2005–06	76.4
2006–07	83.8
2007–08	92.1

[1] Figures for 2005–06 to 2007–08 are on a full resource budgeting basis.

NHS Staff

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses there were in Bolton, North-East in each of the last seven years. [203371]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Nursing Bursaries

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will break down by age recipients of NHS bursaries for nurse training in each year since 2000. [202763]

Mr. Hutton: The following table sets out a summary of the total number of nursing students, by age, who have received a national health service bursary from 1 September 2000.

Age	[1]*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	[2]*2004–05*
Less than 21	5,804	6,320	7,908	11,009	13,245
21–25	15,679	18,649	20,322	18,651	13,929
26–30	5,362	8,279	9,543	9,280	7,714
31–35	3,096	6,447	7,704	7,946	6,820
36–40	2,437	5,405	6,537	6,897	5,957
41–45	1,417	3,225	4,008	4,208	3,622
46–50	598	1,310	1,640	1,719	1,471
51–55	138	343	417	458	348
56–60	16	42	59	69	53
More than 60	1	2	3	2	2
Total	34,458	50,022	58,141	60,239	53,161

[1] Includes estimated figures
[2] Academic year to date

Patient Counselling/Education

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in using patients diagnosed with particular conditions as a bank of advice and counselling for those recently diagnosed with the same condition. [202775]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Approximately 17,000 people with long-term conditions have participated in 1,312 self management training courses delivered by 803 volunteer tutors with long term conditions who have been trained to deliver the Experts Patients Programme.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding the informed patient project will receive in each year until 2009–10; and if he will make a statement. [203624]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The informed patient project is a three-year initiative that is funded centrally and is in its second year. The budget allocation for 2004–05 was £2,127,000 and detailed allocation of future resources have still to be finalised. Informed patient project activities will form part of the forthcoming information for choice strategy, due for publication later this month, which is a three year programme of national and local actions to help people make more informed choices about their health and healthcare.

Pregnancy Advisory Service

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public money was made available to the British Pregnancy Advisory Service for its work in each of the last three years. [202714]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has not directly funded the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) in the last three years. We do not collect data on the funding BPAS receives through its contracts with primary care trusts.

Premature Death

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will define the meaning of premature death when used for the purposes of policy making in his Department. [203794]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* There is no internationally agreed definition of premature mortality. Following extensive public consultation, the national mortality targets set for specific major diseases in the "Our Healthier Nation White Paper" in 1999, and subsequently adopted in the

Department's public service agreement targets for 2004, use deaths under 75 years to represent "premature mortality". This reflects average expectation of life at birth, which is currently around 75 years for men and 80 years for women.

Primary Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of primary care premises are over 30 years old. [203057]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not collected centrally.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Department will be able to assess expenditure in individual cases for each primary care trust. [202232]

Mr. Hutton: Primary care trusts (PCTs) publish audited accounts information in the autumn following the end of the relevant financial year. Audited accounts information for the 2003–04 financial year is available locally for each PCT and from the Department for all PCTs. The audited information in respect of the 2004–05 financial year for all PCTs will be published in their individual annual accounts and will be available centrally in autumn 2005.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what public scrutiny takes place of the spending of primary care trusts top-sliced for private operations; [202579]

(2) what percentage of primary care trust funds in each strategic health authority area are top-sliced for private operations. [202580]

Mr. Hutton: There is no top-slicing of primary care trusts' (PCTs) funds for private operations. It is the responsibility of PCTs to determine how best to use their funding based on the needs of their local populations, taking into account Government policy as well as national and local priorities.

While no top-slicing takes place, PCTs' accounts are, of course, subject to annual audit.

Programme Budget Project Group

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the report of the programme budget project group will be published. [202231]

Mr. Hutton: The programme budget project group has no plans to publish a report. However, a programme budget spend analysis produced by primary care trusts as part of their 2003–04 financial returns will be made public shortly.

Psychotherapy

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision for psychotherapy is available under the national health service in England. [201173]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect information centrally concerning the provision of psychological therapies by type or location. Decisions about provision are a local responsibility, taking into account national guidance, such as the "National Service Framework for Mental Health (1999)", copies of which are available in the Library, and "Organising and Delivering Psychological Therapies (2004)".

The Department also published "Treatment Choice in Psychological Therapies and Counselling (2001)" to aid decisions about which forms of psychological therapy are most appropriate for which patients. Copies of the last two documents have been placed in the Library.

These publications are available on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/MentalHealth/MentalHealthPublications/fs/en?CONTENT IO = 4016395&chk = cxOUgO

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed by *(a)* the Human Tissue Authority and *(b)* the Commission for Public and Patient Involvement in Health; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body. [203113]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) will be created in shadow form on 1 April 2005 to draw up the codes of practice and inspection arrangements relating to the taking, storage and use of human tissue and organs. The number of staff and running costs have yet to be decided.

The HTA will exist until 2008 when it will be replaced by the Regulatory Authority for Fertility and Tissue (RAFT). RAFT will be responsible for regulating and inspecting all functions relating to human tissue, including blood, organs, tissues, cells, gametes and embryos and will absorb the functions.

During 2003–04, the running costs for the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) were £23,677,000 and as at 31 March 2004, there were 197 whole time equivalent posts.

The Department arm's length body review announced the abolition of CPPIH and subject to legislation, its dissolution is due to be completed by 1 August 2006.

Royal Free Hospital

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the reconfiguration of maternity services at the Royal Free Hospital. [203212]

Dr. Ladyman: I understand that proposals concerning the future of maternity services in North Central London, including those provided at the Royal Free Hospital, are still being considered within the strategic health authority. Formal consultation on the proposals is expected to take place in summer 2005 once this work is complete.

Schizophrenia

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions have taken place between the National Institute for Mental Health England and

the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) regarding the implementation of NICE guidelines on the management of schizophrenia. [203198]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There have not been any discussions between the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) specifically about the implementation of the NICE guidelines on the management of schizophrenia. However, NIMHE, through its development centres, provides practical support to national health service trusts in reviewing their service provision for all those with mental ill health, and support to implement national guidance including that developed by NICE.

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme; and if he will make a statement; [199456]

(2) what assessment he has made of the Five-a-Day programme. [199460]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A NOP World survey of the national school fruit scheme was published in October 2003. The NOP World survey found that over a quarter of children and their families were eating more fruit at home after joining the scheme, rising to nearly a third in social class C2DE. In addition, nearly half of all parents thought the scheme has made them more aware of the importance of fruit for a healthy diet. A full evaluation report of the impact of the school fruit and vegetable scheme on children's diet from the Big Lottery Fund will be published in 2005.

A full evaluation of the 5 A DAY community initiatives will be completed by December 2005. Evaluation of the five pilot community initiatives reported an increased intake of one portion per day among those groups with the lowest intakes. The 5 A DAY communications programme aims to influence attitudes towards awareness of 5 A DAY, which are monitored by an annual consumer tracking study commissioned by the Department, next due to be carried out this month. It is also monitored by the Food Standards Agency's consumer attitudes survey, which reported an increase in awareness of the 5 A DAY message from 52 per cent., in 2002 to 59 per cent., in 2003. Results for 2004 are due soon.

Social Workers

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of social workers had registered with the General Social Care Council by 1 December. [202948]

Dr. Ladyman: The General Social Care Council (GSCC) has received 44,435 applications as at 1 December 2004. Recent estimates show that this figure has exceeded 50,000 as at 9 December. Further forms are expected before the GSCC's cut-off date for receiving applications. Accurate data on the number of people in social work positions is yet not available as such data has not been routinely collected for all sectors in which social workers are based. One purpose of the register is to provide that information for workforce planning and other purposes.

5,700 social workers have been registered to date. The rate of registration is expected to increase significantly in December 2004 when new simplified processes take effect. The GSCC has plans in place to process all applications to register, by 1 April 2005 when protection of the title 'social worker' comes into force.

Sunbeds

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to warn people of the danger of excessive use of sunbeds. [201800]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There is no conclusive direct evidence that sunbed exposure causes skin cancer from either of the recent reports on the effects of ultra violet radiation (UVR) from the National Radiological Protection Board and from the International Commission on Non-ionising Radiation Protection. The greatest source of UVR exposure is from the sun.

At the request of Ministers, the SunSmart campaign, which is funded by United Kingdom health Departments, is actively disseminating key messages regarding the dangers of sunbeds. The SunSmart website, at www.sunsmart.org.uk, has a dedicated section on the dangers of sunbed use under the 'stay safe' section. This section includes information on who we recommend should never use a sunbed, which includes people who; are under 16, have fair or freckly skin, burn easily, have a lot of moles, have had skin cancer in the past, have a family history of skin cancer, are using medication that increases sensitivity to UVR.

An expert group, coordinated by Cancer Research UK, is working with the sunbed association in reviewing information they provide in salons, the positioning of such materials and training materials for their staff.

Wandsworth Primary Care Trust

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what budget was granted to Wandsworth Primary Care Trust in each of the last three years. [204096]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department allocates revenue funding to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. The latest round of allocations were announced in December 2002. Wandsworth PCT's share of the available resources are shown in the table.

	Allocation (£ million)
2003–04	275.8
2004–05	303.1
2005–06	332.2

Prior to 2003–04, allocations to PCTs were made by health authorities.

Working Time Directive (Junior Doctors)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what implications the European Working Time Directive will have for the working patterns of junior doctors in the UK. [202968]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: Implementation of the working time directive (WTD) for doctors in training is a matter for individual trusts. To help the national health service to achieve compliance we have supported a national programme of WTD pilots, which effectively contributed to the extensive innovative solutions now in place and which continue to be developed.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 14 December 2004

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Cross-examination

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, what *(a)* advice and *(b)* training is given to judges to help them to deal with family cases in which there is an application by a party who faces an allegation of (i) domestic violence and (ii) sexual abuse to cross-examine the other party about those allegations. [204001]

Mr. Leslie: Judicial training is the responsibility of the Judicial Studies Board, an independent body chaired by Lord Justice Keene. In the Family Jurisdiction, where the alleged victim of domestic violence or sexual abuse is an adult, the alleged perpetrator who disputes the allegation is entitled to cross-examine the alleged victim. This is either in person if they are not legally represented, or by their advocate. The entitlement arises in the interests of justice and a fair trial. Where the alleged perpetrator exercises their entitlement to cross-examine, judges are taught of the need to balance the needs of justice with the needs of the alleged victims. Those needs of the alleged victim include not being subjected to any oppressive, insensitive, or unnecessarily prolonged questioning. If the alleged victim is a child, the child hardly ever gives evidence. His or her account is obtained earlier in an interview which is videoed.

All judges trying cases of this gravity will have been trained among other things in the need for that sensitivity, as well as advised about the impact of domestic violence and sexual abuse on their victims.

TREASURY

Aggregates Tax

Mr. Salmond: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue has been raised by the Aggregate Tax in each quarter of its existence in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the UK. [204159]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise routinely publishes UK Aggregates Levy receipts at http://www.uktradeinfo.com in the Aggregates Levy Bulletin.

A breakdown of Aggregates Levy receipts by UK region is not available separately.

Audit Exemption Threshold

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the deregulatory measure to raise the audit exemption threshold was contained in the list of 147 regulations for reform or removal referred to by the Chancellor in his Pre-Budget Report statement of 10 December 2003. [203890]

John Healey: This deregulatory measure, which raised the audit exemption threshold to reduce the administrative burden on small companies, was not part of the list of 147 regulations for reform or removal referred to by the Chancellor in the 2003 Pre-Budget Report statement.

The statutory audit threshold measure was part of the original Regulatory Reform Action Plan published in February 2002. 147 referred to the number of new measures added to the Regulatory Reform Action Plan since the previous figure was publicised at Budget 2003; at that time the Chancellor had announced there were over 500 deregulatory measures.

Britain in Europe

Mr. Hayes: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a statement on his meeting with representatives of Britain in Europe on 17 November 2004; what issues were discussed; whether civil servants were present; and in what capacity he attended. [204223]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor attended Britain in Europe's board meeting on 17 November 2004, accompanied by his Private Secretary. A wide range of issues relating to Europe were discussed.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many children in Pendle he estimates will benefit from the Child Trust Fund; [204085]

(2) how many children in Burnley he estimates will benefit from the Child Trust Fund. [204805]

Dawn Primarolo: All children born since 1 September 2002 in families awarded Child Benefit will receive a Child Trust Fund. In 2005–06 around 700,000 families will benefit from the Child Trust Fund across the country as a whole. No estimate is available of the number of children benefiting in Pendle. However, there were around 12,000 new births across Lancashire in 2003–04.

The CTF is intended to encourage parents and children to develop the savings habit. It will ensure that every child born since 1 September 2002, whatever their family background, will have access to a stock of assets from the age of 18, so they can invest in their future.

It will also help children and their parents to understand the benefits of saving and investment and how to engage with financial institutions.

Civil Servants

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assurances he obtained from Sir Nicholas Montagu that he would not be consulting with PricewaterhouseCooper's clients on tax matters prior to granting him permission to join PWC. [204024]

Mr. Timms: Sir Nicholas Montagu complied with the requirements of the Business Appointment Rules, and applied for permission to take up his part-time appointment with PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

In submitting his application, he stated that he would not advise on tax matters.

The appointment was approved under the Rules subject to the conditions that:

He should not be personally involved in lobbying, on behalf of PWC or its clients, the Inland Revenue for one year from his last day of service, and Government Ministers or officials in other Departments for six months from his last day of service; and

Acknowledging that it is not part of the job to which he is being appointed, he should stand aside from any discussion of, or giving advice on any tax related matters for two years from his last day of service.

Correspondence

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Inland Revenue will reply to the letter of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead concerning his constituent, Miss Yardley. [204856]

Dawn Primarolo: The hon. Member wrote on 3 November 2004 and the Inland Revenue replied to him on 18 November and 8 December 2004.

Inland Revenue Informers

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Inland Revenue informers had their relationship terminated between 6 March 2000 and 28 July 2000; and how many Inland Revenue handling officers were posted elsewhere during this period. [204443]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue does not keep any form of central record of persons providing information to them (informers). The Inland Revenue does keep central records of covert human intelligence sources. No relationship with a covert human intelligence source was terminated within the dates given. No Inland Revenue handler has been posted elsewhere.

Red Diesel

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the fishing industry of the proposed rise of 1p per litre in the rate of fuel duty for red diesel. [203979]

John Healey *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Chancellor takes account of all relevant economic, social and environmental factors in determining duty rates.

The excise duty paid by the fishing industry on marine fuel used for navigation within community waters is fully repayable, so that it is, in effect, duty free.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the agricultural industry of the proposed rise of 1p per litre in the rate of fuel duty on red diesel. [203980]

John Healey *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Chancellor takes account of all relevant economic, social and environmental factors for all sectors, including the farming industry, in determining duty rates. The Department for Trade and Industry estimate that agriculture accounts for only a small proportion of red diesel consumption.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

Mr. Gray: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 on the use of covert human intelligence sources by Inland Revenue. [204440]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, including the use of covert human intelligence sources, is monitored annually by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioners and is also subject to internal monitoring.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who the *(a)* Commissioner of Inland Revenue and *(b)* Inland Revenue solicitor responsible for determining the impact of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 on the use of informers was. [204441]

Dawn Primarolo: The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act does not govern the use of informers except where those informers are also covert human intelligence sources. I refer the hon. Member to my answer to his companion question (204440).

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Inland Revenue conducted an impact assessment of the effects of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 on informers before its passage into law. [204442]

Dawn Primarolo: I believe the hon. Member is referring to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. That Act is Home Office legislation. In accordance with normal practice the Home Office would have prepared a regulatory impact assessment on the Act.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Betting Terminals

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will place in the Library a copy of the research commissioned by the Association of British Bookmakers into fixed-odds betting terminals to which the Minister for Sport referred on 2 December in Standing Committee B, *Official Report*, column 382. [204207]

Mr. Caborn: It is for the Association of British Bookmakers to decide when and how to publish the results of the research which it has commissioned; but we have drawn this request to their attention.

Children's Play

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will break down the £200 million national funding for children's play announced by her predecessor in June 2001 by *(a)* financial year and *(b)* project; how much of the funding has been spent to date; and if she will make a statement. [203549]

Estelle Morris: The announcement to which the hon. Member refers related to round 4 of the New Opportunities Fund, and therefore future funding for play. The new approach to lottery funding with the establishment of the Big Lottery Fund means that the Government will no longer ring fence pots of money for

particular activities such as play. However we still expect £200 million for play (across the UK) to come from the lottery over time.

Free Television Licences

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pensioners aged over 75 years living in Coventry are entitled to a free television licence. [204003]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. It is not therefore possible to estimate take-up of the concession on a local basis. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Coventry North East, Coventry North West and Coventry South constituencies in 2003–04 was 17,650, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Gambling/Casino Licences

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the guidance to be provided to local authorities on the provision of gambling and casino licences. [204491]

Mr. Caborn: Clause 24 of the Gambling Bill provides for the Gambling Commission to issue guidance to local authorities about the exercise of their functions of the Bill, and to undertake consultation before doing so. We expect the Commission, when it is established, to take consultation forward as an early priority.

Travel Costs

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total travel costs to her Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203772]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* All official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules contained in the Department's staff handbook and all Ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government has published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government has also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House.

Travel costs of special advisers who accompanied the Ministers overseas are included in the annual list the Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers. Other travel costs of special advisers are included in the officials' travel costs on the Department's accounting system and can be disaggregated only at disproportionate cost.

The following table shows expenditure on travel and subsistence by Ministers (domestic only) and officials in the Department from 1997–98 to 2003–04.

£

Financial year	*Ministers T and S (domestic only)*	*Officials (overseas and domestic T and S)*
2003–04	19,483.31	473,483.91
2002–03	24,719.22	479,690.78
2001–02	17,386.39	411,227.86
2000–01	31,931.38	366,112.06
1999–2000	24,539.59	362,767.76
1998–99	22,913.88	352,990.17
1997–98	11,697.81	356,166.64

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201709]

Alun Michael: In 2004–5 Defra is placing advertisements in the publications as listed. On this occasion, the department's objective in doing so is to reach and inform specific communities rather than religious groups, but all these publications are acknowledged as having a Muslim readership:

The Daily Jang
The Nation
Muslim News
Muslim Weekly
Notun Din
Surma
Janamot
Potrika
Bangla Post
London Turkish Gazette
Olay
Al Arab
Al Ahram

All the advertisements placed have been translated into the languages most appropriate for the readers of these newspapers. The advertising has been planned to promote the latest phase of Defra's personal food imports awareness campaign, 'If in doubt, leave it out!'. This campaign is part of a long-term strategy to increase awareness of the personal imports rules among the UK travelling public and to reduce the quantities of illegal food products being seized at UK ports and airports.

It was developed following independent research, which revealed that the rules relating to personal imports of food were relevant to black and minority ethnic communities within the UK, but that awareness of the legislation within these communities was not widespread. The communications activity is intended to reach and engage with black and minority ethnic communities through communications and media channels relevant to them.

Press advertising is only one communications option which the Department considers when planning a public awareness campaign and is evaluated alongside other paid and non-paid communications activity which may involve outreach work, distribution of bi-lingual printed materials and radio advertisements and/or features.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in the last two years. [202355]

Alun Michael: In 2002–03 the four upper floors of 9 Millbank were refurbished at a total cost of £2.5 million. This project included three private offices for ministerial support staff.

No expenditure for refurbishing ministerial private offices was incurred in 2003–04.

Departmental Mail

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many letters were returned to her Department marked as incorrectly addressed in each of the last 12 months; [203719]

(2) if she will place the recent departmental circular on the correct addressing of envelopes in the Library; [203720]

(3) how many recipients received her Department's circular on how to address envelopes; and what its circulation cost. [203721]

Alun Michael: Many items of correspondence are returned to Defra, often because of incorrect or poor addressing by the senders in the first place. We endeavour to keep returned mail to a minimum. That is why an internal memo was issued recently to all Defra staff drawing attention to the need to address envelopes correctly. All Defra staff would have seen the memo in our weekly Office Notice. Drafting and circulating the memo took a couple of minutes and involved significantly less time than answering the hon. Gentleman's questions. Records of incorrectly addressed envelopes are not maintained because of disproportionate costs. As the memo was intended for internal use, there is no reason to place a copy in the House Library, but the text of the note was as follows:

Addressing of envelopes

Many letters or correspondence are being returned to the Communication Room (Post Room) as undelivered by the Royal Mail, this is not only time-consuming but also costly to both Defra and Royal Mail. The reason for these letters not to be delivered is as a result of incorrect or poor addressing of envelopes by the senders.

In order for us as a Department to keep to the spirit of sustainability and reducing waste, Corporate Support Branch (CSB) has therefore, decided to issue the following tip on addressing envelopes correctly:

When addressing outgoing mail, ensure that the address is typed or handwritten legibly. The address should ideally be kept parallel to the longest side of the envelope. The address must fall within the address clear zone. There must be a clear zone all around the address of 5mm. This must not encroach on other clear zones. There must be a clear zone of 5mm around the address block, including any customer barcode. The area around the address block must be kept clear of graphics, printing and variations in background to enable the Optical Character Reading (OCR) equipment to locate the address and obtain a clean address image.

Window Envelopes

There is no maximum or minimum size for a window. However the window size is constrained by the length of the address, font size, number of lines of the address, address boundaries and clear zones. In order to read and interpret the address, the automation equipment locates the position of the window and takes an image of the address. The complete address must be clearly visible through the window with a 5mm clear zone around it.

The message then refers the reader to advice in more detail on the Defra intranet.

Departmental Management Board

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what role is played by the two non-executive directors on her Department's management board; and what remuneration each receives. [204323]

Alun Michael: The role of non-executives is to use their experience outside Government to bring an independent perspective and constructive challenge to all of the board's business, in particular to the areas of change management, performance management, and risk.

One of the non-executives is also chair of our Audit and Risk Committee. Other duties carried out by them include: co-chairing a performance management committee that analyses the Department's balanced scorecard, membership of the Ministerial Challenge Panel on regulation, and assisting the Senior Appointments Board in certain recruitment exercises and remuneration issues.

Their remuneration is £10,000 per annum (plus reasonable expenses).

E-mail

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for announcements and publications issued by her Department and those public bodies reporting to her. [203684]

Alun Michael: Defra has no specific plans at the moment to introduce an automatic e-mail notification service. We are currently working with our recently-appointed strategic IT supplier to review the ways that we supply information electronically to Defra's customers and to the public, and consideration will be given to the introduction of such a service as part of the review.

Emissions Trading

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what studies the Government has made of *(a)* sulphur dioxide and *(b)* nitrous oxide trading in the United States; and what conclusions it has drawn. [203666]

Mr. Morley: While the Government has not undertaken any specific studies on the US trading systems for SO_2 and NO_x, the US experience in this area

has informed the development of trading schemes to address emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular the UK Emissions Trading Scheme and the implementation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. It has also informed work on implementation of the revised Large Combustion Plants Directive and has prompted the Government's call for the integrated pollution prevention and control Directive to be further amended so as to facilitate greater potential for emissions trading.

Farmers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many dairy farmers there were in the UK in each of the last five years. [201131]

Alun Michael: The following figures show the number of principal farmers, partners, directors and their spouses (if working on the holding) in England on holdings where dairy is the predominant activity. Figures for the other UK countries fall under the jurisdiction of the devolved authorities.

	Number of farmers, partners, directors and spouses	*Number of holdings*
Main holdings only		
1999	33,216	15,623
Main and minor holdings		
2000	31,418	14,841
2001	29,732	14,053
2002	30,014	14,231
2003	28,438	13,235

Notes:
1. A register improvement exercise increased the number of holdings in 2001. The 2000 figures for main and minor holdings are therefore not comparable with the later figures.
2. From 2000 we have maintained a combined database of all holdings .Prior to that, the census database was of main holdings only. A separate database was held of minor holdings but these were only surveyed once every five years or so.

Source:
June Agricultural Census

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers there were in the UK in each of the last five years. [201132]

Alun Michael: The following figures show the number of principal farmers, partners, directors and their spouses (if working on the holding) in England and the number of holdings they are working on. Figures for the other UK countries fall under the jurisdiction of the devolved authorities.

	Number of farmers, partners, directors and spouses	*Number of holdings*
Main holdings only		
1999	203,362	118,063
Main and minor holdings		
2000	220,931	133,246
2001	233,828	138,287
2002	225,520	139,811
2003	219,123	136,193

Note:
A register improvement exercise increased the registered holdings in 2001. The 2000 figures for main and minor holdings are therefore not comparable with the later figures.

Source:
June Agricultural Census

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cases have been brought against her Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202365]

Alun Michael: The whole point of the incorporation of the European Charter on Human Rights into domestic law was to allow human rights considerations to be considered fully at every level of the legal system as a matter of course rather than having to be considered separately and laboriously as a single issue. Not surprisingly, the great majority of cases brought against the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs involve human rights only when they are brought in support of other litigation—as a 'backstop' claim.

As a result this makes any human rights elements to a case very hard to count separately. The subjects of the convention rights themselves are, to a very great extent, already actionable in existing domestic law.

For these reasons it would not be possible to apportion costs and compensation payments as requested without reviewing every single case handled by this Department since October 2000, which would give rise to disproportionate cost.

Pigs/Pigmeat Sales

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of *(a)* pork, *(b)* bacon and *(c)* ham sold in UK supermarkets is (i) British produced and (ii) bears the Meat and Livestock Commission's Quality Standard Mark. [203124]

Alun Michael: Proportions are set out in the following table:

Percentage

	(a) Pork	*(b) Bacon*	*(c) Ham*
(i) British produced	83	41	41
(ii)Bears Quality Standard Mark	62	16	14

However, in addition to the above figures several large supermarkets[1] currently supply 100 per cent. British fresh pork, but do not carry the Quality

Standard Mark. The British Pig Executive (BPEX) is working closely with them to encourage the use of the QSM on their packaging.

[1] Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and Budgens supply 100 per cent. British fresh pork, and Morrisons supply predominantly British fresh pork.

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the size of the UK pig herd was in *(a)* 1994, *(b)* 1999 and *(c)* 2004. [203126]

Alun Michael: The following figures show the size of the pig herd in England. Figures for the other UK countries fall under the jurisdiction of the devolved authorities. Numbers for 2004 are currently provisional, final figures are due to be published on 16 December 2004.

	Total pigs
(a) 1994	6,591,684
(b) 1999	6,163,443
(c) 2004	4,089,352

Source:
June Agricultural Census

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations her Department has received regarding the impact of pork imports on domestic pig production. [203157]

Alun Michael: We are aware of the British Pig Industry's concerns surrounding the impact of pork imports, not least following the recent British Pig Executive (BPEX) report. This report sought to illustrate the additional cost and detrimental market effects on UK pig producers in achieving high welfare standards.

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the membership is of the *(a)* Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards, *(b)* Zoos Forum, *(c)* Advisory Committee on Pesticides and *(d)* Farm Animal Welfare Council; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running costs of each body were in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203100]

Alun Michael: The membership of each of these bodies and the figures that are available are listed, subject to the qualifications.

(i) Membership is accurate as at 31 March 2004

(ii) The total cost of salaries and expenses paid to members and the running costs for each committee are included with Defra's accounts but are not separately identifiable. I have included the remuneration levels, as at 31 March 2004 and the total sponsorship cost to the department (which would include remuneration and expenses of members, administrative costs, research funding and any other cost to the department directly related to the sponsorship of the body) for the last financial year.

(iii) Departmental staff service these bodies alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately.

Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards

Prof. Stephen Holgate (Chair)
Prof. Jon Ayres
Prof. Peter Blain
Dr. Peter Baxter
Dr. Paul Cullinan
Mrs. Ann Davison
Prof. Richard Derwent QBE
Dr. Jonathon Grigg
Prof. Roy Harrison QBE
Prof. Francis J. Kelly
Dr. Geoffrey Pigott
Dr. Alison Searl
Mr. John Stedman

The Chair receives £193.64 per day, members receive £149.35 per day
Defra expenditure on remuneration—£17,000

Zoos Forum

Mr. Nick Jackson MBE (acting chair)
Mrs. Suzanne Boardman
Dr. Sue Dale-Tunnicliffe
Mr. Alastair Grant
Mr. Andrew Greenwood
Dr. Heathe Hall
Mr. Raymond Ings
Dr. James Kirkwood
Mr. Stewart Muir
Dr. Miranda Stevenson
Ms Mary Talbot-Rosevear
Mr. Tim Thomas MBE
Mr. Peter Wearden

Chair and board members are unpaid
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£15,240.68

Advisory Committee on Pesticides

Prof. David N M Coggon (Chair)
Dr. David Nicholas Bateman
Dr. John Cherrie
Mr. James Clarke
Dr. Richard Charles Clutterbuck
Prof. Gareth Edwards-Jones
Dr. Clifford Elcombe
Dr. Ian Grieve
Mr. Vyvyan Howard
Ms Rosaline Howell
Prof. David W. Macdonald
Dr. Lorraine Maltby
Prof. Graham Anthony Matthews
Ms Diane McCrea
Dr. Patricia Rose McElhatton
Dr. Daniel Osborn
Prof. Robert Henry Smith
Mr. Christopher Stopes
Dr. Vinod Tohani
Dr. Rosemary Waring

Chair receives £199 per meeting, the members receive £156 per meeting
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£104,000

Farm Animal Welfare Council

Dr. Judy Macarthur Clark CBE (Chair)
Mr. Ian Douglas Baker
Mrs. Rosemary Berry
Mr. John Alexander Campbell Don
Prof. Peter Roderick English
Mr. Graham Godbold
Mr. Edmund Charles Michael Harper
Mr. David C Henderson
Mr. James William Hook
Prof. Alistair Burnett Lawrence
Mrs. Ruth Layton
Mr. Stephen Andrew Lister
Mr. Gareth Jones Lloyd
Mr. Richard Maunder
Prof. John Peter Mcinerney
Prof. David Morton
Miss Miriam Jane Parker
Dr. Martin James Potter
Rev. Prof. Michael Reiss
Mrs. Barbara Smith
Mr. Selwyn Michael Vaughan
Mrs. Meryl Ward

Chair receives £199 per day, members receive £125 per day
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£412,654

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the membership is of the *(a)* Government-Industry Forum on non-Food Uses of Crop, *(b)* Hill Farming Advisory Committee for England, Wales and Northern I reland, *(c)* Independent Advisory Group on Cattle TB, *(d)* Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council, *(e)* Pesticides Residue Committee, *(f)* Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee, *(g)* Sustainable Development Education Panel, *(h)* Veterinary Products Committee, *(i)* Veterinary Residues Committee and *(j)* Water Regulations Advisory Committee; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203809]

Alun Michael: The membership of each of these bodies and the figures that are available are listed, subject to the qualifications.

(i) Membership is accurate as at 31 March 2004

(ii) The total cost of salaries and expenses paid to members and the running costs for each committee are included with Defra's accounts but are not separately identifiable. I have included the remuneration levels, as at 31 March 2004 and the total sponsorship cost to the department (which would include remuneration and expenses of members, administrative costs, research funding and any other cost to the department directly related to the sponsorship of the body) for the last financial year.

(iii) Departmental staff service these bodies alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately.

The Government-Industry Forum on non-Food Uses of Crops the Sustainable Development Education Panel and the Water Regulations Advisory Committee have been wound up and the Hill Farming Advisory Committee and the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee are both currently in abeyance.

Independent Scientific Group on TB in Cattle

Mr. John Bourne (Chair)
Prof. Christl Donnelly
Sir David Cox
Prof. George Gettinby
Prof. John Peter Mcinerney
Prof. Ivan Morrison
Dr. Rosemary Woodroffe

Chair receives £185 per day, members receive £153 per day
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£200,000

Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Committee

Lady Sheelin Virginia Knollys (Chair)
Cllr. Stewart Stacey
Ms Jane Barron
Cllr. Michael John Bruton
Mr. David Brian Dare
Mrs. Carol Davenport
Mrs. Helen Green
Mr. Tony Hirst QBE
Dr. Christine Johnstone
Mr. Wyndham Mitchell
Mr. David Morgan
Mr. Mike Palmer
Dr. David Pattison
Mr. John Richard Pomfret
Mrs. Audrey Smith
Dr. Nigel John Willby
Mrs. Fiona Willis

The chair receives £197.25 per day, the members are unpaid
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£50,000

Pesticide Residues Committee

Dr. Ian Brown (Chair)
Mr. Ian Finlayson
Ms Morven Mceachern
Ms Hazel Philips
Prof. Andrew Gordon Renwick
Mr. Graham Philip Ward
Ms Maura Wilson

The chair receives £159 per day, the members receive £125 per day
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£65,000

Veterinary Products Committee

Mr. David Skilton (Chair)
Dr. Alistair Boxall
Prof. Tar-Ching Aw
Dr. Andrew John Bradley
Dr. Paul George Brantom
Dr. Sarah Margaret Elizabeth Cockbill
Mrs Rosemary Vivien Collingborn
Prof. Barry Cookson

Dr. Susan Dawson
Prof. Michael Joseph Day
Dr. Jonathan Elliott
Dr. John Gilleard
Mrs. Sheila Jessie Graham
Dr. Peter Greaves
Dr. Raymond John Heitzman
Dr. Leigh Marian Henderson
Dr. Leonard Stephen Levy
Mr. Stephen Andrew Lister
Dr. William John Mccaughey
Mr. Frederick McKeating
Prof. Andrea Mary Nolan
Prof. Stuart Reid
Prof. Bertus Karel Rima
Prof. Howard Norman Ernest Stevens
Dr. John Paul Thompson
Mr. John Harold Verrall
Mr. Anthony Edward Wall
Dr. Jason Weeks

The chair receives £245 per meeting, members receive £141 per meeting
The running costs are met by the industry and not Defra

Veterinary Residues Committee

(Chair vacant)
Mrs. Dorothy Ann Craig
Mr. John Ambrose
Prof. Keith G. Anderson
Prof. Alan Boobis
Dr. Paul George Brantom
Mr. Neil Richard Cutler
Prof. Julie L. Fitzpatrick
Dr. Keith Lawrence
Dr. William John Mccaughey
Mrs. Freida Stack
Dr. Brian Geoffrey Vernon

The chair receives £193 per meeting, members receive £151 per meeting
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£51,300

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the membership is of the *(a)* Air Quality Expert Group, *(b)* Apple and Pear Research Council, *(c)* Committee of Investigation for Great Britain, *(d)* Committee on Agricultural Valuation, *(e)* Committee on Products and Processes for Use in Public Water Supply, *(f)* Consumers' Committee for Great Britain under the Agriculture Marketing Act 1958, *(g)* Darwin Advisory Committee and *(h)* Expert Group on Cryptosporidium in Water Supply; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running costs of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203810]

Alun Michael: The membership of each of these bodies and the figures that are available are listed, subject to the qualifications as follows.

(i) Membership is accurate as at 31 March 2004

(ii) The total cost of salaries and expenses paid to members and the running costs for each committee are included with Defra's accounts but are not separately identifiable. I have included the remuneration levels, as at 31 March 2004 and the total sponsorship cost to the Department (which would include remuneration and expenses of members, administrative costs, research funding and any other cost to the Department directly related to the sponsorship of the body) for the last financial year.

(iii) Departmental staff service these bodies alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately.

The Apple and Pear Research Council is no longer in existence and the Committee of Investigation for Great Britain, the Committee on Agricultural Valuation and the Consumers Committee for Great Britain are all currently inactive.

Air Quality Expert Group

Professor Mike J Pilling (chair)
Professor Helen Apsimon
Dr .David J Carruthers
Mr. David C Carslaw
Dr. Roy N Colville
Professor Richard Derwent OBE
Mr. Stephen R Dorling
Professor Bernard Fisher
Professor Roy Harrison OBE
Dr. Mathew R Heal
Professor Duncan P H Laxen
Dr. Sarah J Lindley
Dr. Ian S Mccrae
Mr. John Stedman

The chair receives £193.64 per day (up to a maximum of 40 days per year) and members receive £149.35 (up to a maximum of 20 days per year)
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£74,000

Committee on products and processes for use in public water supply

Mr. Owen Hydes OBE (chair)
Mr. Stephen Robjohns
Mr. Anthony Lloyd
Mrs. Joy Fraser
Dr. John B Greig
Professor Roger F Stokes
Mr. Geoff R Tute
Mr. Robin M Walls

The chair receives £230 per day, members receive £196.
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£107,500

Darwin Advisory Committee

Professor David Ingram (chair)
Dr. Mark Collins
Professor Dianne Edwards
Professor David Goode
Professor David McDonald
Dr. Eimear Nic Lughada
Dr. Melanie O'neill
Professor Philip Rainbow
Professor Ian Swingland

Miss Kerry ten Kate

The chair and members are unpaid
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£3,712

Expert group on cryptosporidium in water supply

Professor Ian Bouchier (chair)
Dr. C Benton
Dr. R Chalmers
Mr. D Clapham
Professor M Farthing
Mr. T Hall
Professor P Hunter
Dr. R Joce
Dr .C Ramsay
Mr. R Robinson
Professor H Smith
Dr. J Stuart

The chair and members are unpaid
The group has recently gone through a period on inactivity and therefore there are no figures on expenditure on sponsorship.

Regional Climate Change Partnerships

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated public expenditure on the regional climate change partnerships in England was in the latest year for which figures are available. [203560]

Mr. Morley: The regional climate change partnerships are stakeholder-led groups which determine their own work programmes on the impacts of climate change and adaptation. The Department funds the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) to help UK organisations assess and prepare for the impacts of climate change. UKCIP works with the regional climate change partnerships, but the partnerships do not receive direct funding from this source. However, many other national, regional and local level public sector organisations are represented in the partnerships, providing varying amounts of both financial and in-kind resource. Private sector organisations are also represented.

It was developed following independent research, which revealed that the rules relating to personal imports of food were relevant to black and minority ethnic communities within the UK, but that awareness of the legislation within these communities was not wide spread. The communications activity is intended to reach and engage with black and minority ethnic communities through communications and media channels relevant to them.

Press advertising is only one communications option which the Department considers when planning a public awareness campaign and is evaluated alongside other paid and non-paid communications activity which may involve outreach work, distribution of bi-lingual printed materials and radio advertisements and/or features.

Sellafield (Flooding)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evaluation she has made of the threat of flooding to Sellafield from the River Calder; and what assessment she has made of the relevant flood maps produced by the Environment Agency. [202811]

Mr. Morley: I understand the Environment Agency has carried out a thorough evaluation of the threat of flooding to Sellafield from the River Calder using their most accurate modelling techniques. More detailed site specific modelling work has now been made available which takes account of the heavily engineered channel that improves conveyance to the River Calder running through the site.

This evaluation will be used to update the flood map on 10 January 2005. The new outline will show the area of site predicted to be at flood risk to be significantly reduced and limited to a 0.1 per cent. risk of a flood occurring in any one year.

Timber

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to fund the establishment and maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [204109]

Alun Michael: The UK central Government Departments and devolved Administrations have agreed that Defra should proceed to invite tenders for a service provider to set up and operate a central point of expertise on timber (CPET) help line. This will be Phase 2 of CPET and we plan to invite tenders in the spring of 2005.

Defra has already commissioned consultants ProForest to operate a pilot help line. This is planned to finish by the end of March 2005 and will help Defra to draw up the contract terms and conditions for the full help line service.

Bidders for the CPET help line will be invited to offer proposals that will include income generation through fees and charges. It remains to be seen whether and to what extent income generation is a viable proposition but the Government have earmarked funds to underwrite the service for its first three years.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what projects local authorities are undertaking to reuse household wood. [200473]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* The Department does not hold information on all the projects local authorities are undertaking to recycle waste products such as household wood. However the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) "RecycleWood" programme does hold a map of self-nominated organisations that offer services and facilities for collecting and processing wood waste and this is available through WRAP'S website, http://www.wrap.org.uk/.

Waste

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairswhat measures

she is taking to ensure that the polluter pays principle applies to the collection and management of municipal waste; which 10 local authorities have the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest recycling rates; and which political parties control each of these authorities. [203660]

Mr. Morley: Government applies the polluter pays principle to the collection and management of municipal waste by enabling local authorities to charge for the collection of commercial and industrial waste and bulky or heavy items of household waste. Landfill tax is payable on all municipal waste landfilled.

The 10 local authorities with the highest and lowest recycling and composting rates in England are given in the following table, with percentages achieved for 2002–03, which are the most recent audited data available. The table also shows the current political control in these local authorities.

Local authority	*Percentage of household waste recycled and composted in 2002–03*[1]	*Political Party in Control*[2]
Daventry district council	44	Conservative
Lichfield district council	43	Conservative
Wyre borough council	33	Conservative
Melton district council	31	Conservative
Isle of Wight district council	31	No overall control
St. Edmundsbury district council	30	Conservative
Windsor and Maidenhead borough council	29	Liberal Democrats
Forest Heath district council	28	Conservative
Eastleigh borough council	28	Liberal Democrats
Chiltern district council (joint 10th place)	27	Conservative
Dorset county council (joint 10th place)	27	Conservative
Kettering district council	4	Conservative
North Tyneside council	4	Conservative
Rochdale Metropolitan borough council	4	No overall control
Corby district council	4	Labour
Tower Hamlets London borough	3	Labour
Bolsover district council	3	Labour
Hackney London borough	3	Labour
Sunderland city council	2	Labour
Barking and Dagenham London borough	2	Labour
Liverpool Metropolitan borough council	2	Liberal Democrats

[1] These data are published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and are available at www.bvpi.gov.uk. The level of household waste recycling and composting in local authorities is the sum of Best Value Performance Indicator 82a and 82b (percentage of household waste sent for recycling and composting respectively).
[2] Information on party political control has been obtained from councils' websites or by direct contact with the authority.

Water Rates

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the tax component of the recent increase in water rates is. [203673]

Mr. Morley: Changes to Corporation Tax on water companies from 1 April 2004 will contribute about £5 to the increase in the average household water and sewerage bill in England and Wales for the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2010. The effect on each company, which depends on its tax position, is set out in 'Future water and sewerage charges 2005–10: final determinations', published by Ofwat on 2 December 2004, which is in the Library of the House.

CABINET OFFICE

Official Residences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost was of running each official residence for which her Department is responsible in the last year for which figures are available. [204423]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford, (Mr. Prisk), 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 129W.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the cost of receptions and parties hosted by Ministers in her Department in their official residences has been since 1997; [204533]

(2) if she will list overnight guests to official residences in her Department since 1997. [204532]

Ruth Kelly: Ministers in the Cabinet Office do not have an official residence.

Projected Operation Budgets

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the projected *(a)* resource budget, *(b)* staff numbers and *(c)* running costs are of (i) the Regulatory Impact Unit and (ii) the Better Regulation Task Force for 2004–07. [203891]

Ruth Kelly: The Regulatory Impact Unit budget (resource and running costs) for 2004–05 is £3.5 million and of this, £550,000 is for the Better Regulation Task Force.

As at the 1 April 2004, 62 staff were working in the Regulatory Impact Unit and of these, nine worked in the Better Regulation Task Force Secretariat.

The projected budget and staff numbers for 2005–06 to 2007–08 will be finalised following completion of the Cabinet Office's business planning round in 2005.

Public Engagements

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his answer of 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 252W, on public engagements, whether he fulfilled public engagements in *(a)* September and *(b)* October. [204864]

Mr. Milburn: No. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I previously gave him on the 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 252W.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Cabinet Office special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204301]

Ruth Kelly: Special Advisers contacts with external bodies and organisations are undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

PRIME MINISTER

Butler Report

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what action has been taken to address the recommendation in paragraph 585 of Lord Butler's Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction concerning the use of new information systems to bring together sources of expertise in Government on proliferation; and if he will make a statement; [205013]

(2) what action has been taken to address the recommendation in paragraph 604 of Lord Butler's Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction that the intelligence community review their conventions; and if he will make a statement; [205014]

(3) what action has been taken to address the recommendation in paragraph 600 of Lord Butler's Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction concerning the size, resources and career structure of the Assessments Staff; and if he will make a statement. [205015]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 54WS.

Butler Review

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Prime Minister what action has been taken to address the concerns expressed in paragraph 611 of Lord Butler's Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction, concerning Government procedures; and if he will make a statement. [205017]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to my statement of 20 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 195–207.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Capital Expenditure

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what capital expenditure has been at the Lagan Valley hospital in each year since 1997. [204018]

Angela Smith: The information in respect of capital expenditure at the Lagan Valley hospital in each year since 1997, is detailed in the following table:

Capital expenditure at the Lagan Valley hospital from 1997–98 to 2003–04

Year to 31 March	£
1998	720,460
1999	231,024
2000	1,664,933
2001	1,391,000
2002	1,223,076
2003	636,670
2004	2,551,000

Capital Formula Review

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is his policy that the Capital Formula Review should redistribute resources in line with population changes; and when the new formula will be applied. [204115]

Angela Smith: The capitation formula has always taken account of population changes. The impact of such changes has to be considered alongside the changes in the other factors in the formula in determining the speed of implementation of shifts in the resource allocation pattern. The public consultation period for the new formula finished on 30 November 2004. My officials are currently considering the responses, and I intend to make a decision on the implementation of a revised formula in the New Year.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203304]

Angela Smith: The Northern Ireland Departments have not compiled statistics of files destroyed and such figures would be available only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203305]

Angela Smith: Following consultation with Northern Ireland Departments, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland issued the Northern Ireland Records Management Standard (NIRMS) in 2002 as records management guidance for those Departments. It was augmented in 2003 with 'Guidelines on Information Audits and Disposal Schedules'. The guidance supports the carrying out of Departmental and PRONI responsibilities under the Public Records Act (NI) 1923.

As a Whitehall Department coming under the Public Records Act 1958, the Northern Ireland Office receives its formal records management advice from The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office). The National Archives is developing on an on-going basis a range of guidance for Whitehall Departments. Therefore the NIRMS guidance does not apply to that Department.

Halloween

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fire-related *(a)* injuries, *(b)* accident and emergency attendances, *(c)* ambulance calls, *(d)* fire service call-outs and *(e)* police calls were reported over the Halloween period in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [202044]

Angela Smith: The number of fire-related injuries, ambulance calls and fire service call-outs that were reported over the Halloween period in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years is detailed in the following table. Information about accident and emergency attendances by reason is not collected centrally and the number of police calls could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

	(a) Injuries	*(b) Accident and emergency attendances*	*(c) Ambulance calls*	*(d) Fire service call-outs*	*(e) Police calls*
2004	n/a	n/a	29	3161	n/a
2003	16	n/a	41	3582	n/a
2002	21	n/a	41	2940	n/a
2001	15	n/a	59	3697	n/a
2000	11	n/a	57	2807	n/a
1999	15	n/a	49	2944	n/a
1998	24	n/a	68	n/a	n/a
1997	13	n/a	42	n/a	n/a
1996	11	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1995	14	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = not available

Source:

(a) Hospital Inpatient System; *(c)* Northern Ireland Ambulance Service; *(d)* Fire Authority for Northern Ireland.

The Halloween period has been taken to be 11 October to 8 November in each year.

Information for *(a)* relating to 2004 is not available.

Information for *(c)* relating to 1995 and 1996 is not available due to changes in information technology systems.

Information for *(d)* 1995–98 is not readily available.

Legislation

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what pieces of legislation passed in the last 30 years that the Department is responsible for remain to be brought into force, broken down by year of enactment. [200445]

Mr. Paul Murphy *[pursuant to his reply on 1 December 2004 (Official Report, c. 138W)]:* The information provided contained some factual inaccuracies. The correct answer is as follows:

The following list sets out a broad overview of Acts of Parliament from 1997 for which the Northern Ireland Office is responsible and parts of which remain to be brought into force. The following list does not include provisions which have never been in force and are now repealed or spent.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998

All in force, apart from

Schedule 13 paras

1—Minor and Consequential Amendments —Repealed (never in force)

10—Minor and Consequential Amendments—Repealed (never in force).

Sch. 13 paras

16—Repealed

18—Repealed

Sch. 15—Repeals—Not in force, apart from in cases of exception mentioned in the schedule.

Justice (NI) Act 2002

Part I

S1—Guarantee of continued judicial independence—not yet commenced.

S2—Introductory—not yet commenced

S3—Judicial Appointments Commission—not yet commenced

S4—Appointment to most senior judicial offices—not yet commenced

S5—Appointment to listed judicial offices—not yet commenced

S6—Removal from most senior judicial offices—not yet commenced

S7—Removal from listed judicial offices—not yet commenced

S8—Tribunals for considering removals—not yet commenced.

S9(12)—Lay magistrates—not yet commenced

S10—Transfer of functions of justices of the peace—not yet commenced

S11—Transfer of functions of lay panellists—not yet commenced

S12—Role of LCJ—not yet commenced

S13—Presiding county court judge—not yet commenced.

S14—Presiding resident magistrate—not yet commenced

S15—Presiding lay magistrate—not yet commenced

S16—Complaints about holders of judicial office—not yet commenced

S20—Crown Solicitor—not yet commenced

Part II

S22—Attorney General—not yet commenced

S23—Terms of appointment of Attorney General—not yet commenced

S24—Removal of Attorney General—not yet commenced

S25—Participation of Attorney General in Assembly proceedings—not yet commenced

S26—Annual Report by Attorney General—not yet commenced

S27—Advocate General—not yet commenced

S28—Functions of Advocate General—not yet commenced

S29—Public Prosecution Service—not yet commenced

S30—Director of Public Prosecutions—not yet commenced

S31—Conduct of prosecutions—not yet commenced
S32—Discontinuance of proceedings before a court appearance—not yet commenced
S33—Consents to prosecutions—not yet commenced
S34—Police Complaints—not yet commenced
S35—Information for Director—not yet commenced
S36—Exercise of functions by and on behalf of Service—not yet commenced
S37—Code for Prosecutors—not yet commenced
S38—Equality and non-discrimination—not yet commenced
S39—Reports by Director—not yet commenced
S40—Superintendence and removal of director—not yet commenced
S41—Transfer of functions etc—not yet commenced
S42—Independence of Director—not yet commenced
S43—Appointment and removal of Director by Attorney General—not yet commenced
S44—Interpretation—not yet commenced

Part III
S50—Law Commission—not yet commenced
S51—Duties of Commission—not yet commenced
S52—Reports etc.—not yet commenced

Part IV
S53(6)—Aims of youth justice system—not yet commenced
S56—Custody care orders—not yet commenced
S63—Extension of youth justice system to 17 year olds—not yet commenced
S64—Juvenile justice centre order for 17 year olds—not yet commenced
S65—Consultation about detention—not yet commenced

Part V
S67—Flying of flags at court houses—not yet commenced
S72—Local community safety partnerships—not yet commenced
S73—Constitutional of rules committees—not yet commenced
S76—Exceptional legal aid—not yet commenced
S78—Power to abolish court service—not yet commenced

Part VI
S82—Excepted matters: new institutions—not yet commenced
S83—Reserved matters: new institutions—not yet commenced
S84—Assembly Acts about judiciary, law officers and prosecutions—not yet commenced
S85—Minor and consequential amendments—not yet commenced
S86—Repeals and revocations—not yet commenced

Schedules
S1—Listed judicial offices—not yet commenced
S2—Judicial Appointments Commission—not yet commenced
S3—Appointment to listed judicial offices—not yet commenced
S4—Functions of justices of the peace—not yet commenced
S5—Transfer of functions to LCJ—not yet commenced
S7—Functions of Advocate General—not yet commenced
S9—Law Commission—not yet commenced
S11—Extension of youth justice system to 17 year olds—not yet commenced
S12—Minor and consequential amendments—not yet commenced
S13—Repeals and revocations—not yet commenced

The Police (NI) Act 2003
District Policing Partnerships
Section 15(1)—(5)—Independent members: declaration against terrorism—not in force.
Section 16(1)—Independent members: disqualification—not in force
Section 19 (1)—Facilities establishment of Belfast district policing partnership's sub-groups and deals with their composition and functions.

Police functions and Service
Section 26 (1)—(3)—Protected disclosures by police officers—not in force.

Searches and Samples
Section 41 (1)—Intimate searches—not in force.
Section 42 (2)—(5) Intimate samples—not in force.
Schedule 1—Belfast—not in force
Schedule 4—repeals and revocations—not in force apart from exceptions

Justice (NI) Act 2004–12–14
S1—Transfer to LC of functions relating to JAC—not yet commenced
S2—Membership of the Commission—not yet commenced
S3—Duty of Commission to secure judiciary reflective of the community—not yet commenced
S4—Appointment of LCJ and LJs of appeal—not yet commenced
S5—Removal or suspension from listed judicial offices—not yet commenced
S6—Duty of the DPP to refer certain matters to police ombudsman—not yet commenced
S7—Influencing a prosecutor—not yet commenced
S8—Guidance for CJ organisations on human rights standards—not yet commenced
S16—Court security—not yet commenced
S1—Transfer to LC of functions relating to NI JAC—not yet commenced
S3—Court security—not yet commenced
S4—(partially)—Repeals—not yet commenced.

Royal Irish Regiment

Mr. Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average weekly working hours for the junior ranks of the full-time Home Service Royal Irish Regiment were between October 2003 and October 2004. [203546]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

While some information on working patterns for full-time members of the Home Service Battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment is held by individual battalions, the information is not held in the format requested.

Stair Lifts

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients who have been listed as high priority are on the waiting list for a stair lift, broken down by health trust area. [204113]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

Health and social services trust	*Number of high priority patients waiting for a stair lift*
Armagh and Dungannon	3
Causeway	0
Craigavon and Banbridge Community	0
Down Lisburn	0
Foyle	30
Greenpark	No remit
Homefirst	33
Newry and Mourne	3
North and West Belfast	0
South and East Belfast	0
Sperrin Lakeland	11
Ulster Community and hospitals	0

TRANSPORT

A1 Improvements

Mr. Peter Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the revised start dates are of construction of *(a)* the A1 Dishforth to Barton upgrade and *(b)* the Haydon Bridge bypass. [204998]

Mr. Jamieson: The information is as follows.

Al Dishforth to Barton upgrade

This scheme is included in a list of 33 schemes announced by the Highways Agency on 1 December 2004 that are planned to start construction by April 2008.

A69 Haydon Bridge bypass

The A69 Haydon Bridge bypass and 13 other schemes are identified as being on routes of predominantly regional rather than national importance. Ministers wish to engage with regional and local stakeholders in identifying priorities for these schemes within overall transport investment. Subject to regional priorities and funding, these schemes should be considered for a start of works from 2008 onwards.

A14

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when he plans to launch the public consultation on plans to widen the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon; [204540]

(2) for what reasons the public consultation on plans to widen the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon has been delayed. [204541]

Mr. Jamieson: Public consultation on proposals for the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton improvement is now expected to start in spring 2005.

The public consultation has been put back to allow more time for the Highways Agency to consider an alternative proposal to the scheme recommended by the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Study (CHUMMS). The alternative has been put forward as a result of consultations with local authorities in preparation for the public consultation.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total external spending by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202419]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport (including Executive Agencies) expenditure on external Private Finance consultants was £12,571,700 in 2003–04 and £7,595,500 to date in 2004–05.

The Department does not retain information on the full-time equivalent consultants these figures represent, or on the number of billed consultant hours. Consultants are appointed on a variety of terms only some of which are based on staff numbers or time. These reasons also prevent us from calculating an average cost per consultant.

The firms employed by the Department over this period were:

Atis Real Weatherall, Atkins Management Consultants, WS Atkins, Aukett, Berwin Leighton Painser, Bullen, Carl Bro IBI, Close Resources, Deloitte, Denton Wilde Sapte, Ernst and Young, Flint and Neill, Halcrow, Hays Accountancy Personnel, Hedra, IBM UK, Jacobs, JKL and Hide Recruitment, John Matchett, Mott MacDonald, MVM Recruitment, Nabarro Nathanson, Office of Government Commerce, Owen Williams, Panell Kerr Forster, Partnerships UK, Pell Frischmann, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Project Management Recruitment, Qinetiq, Turner and Townsend, Willis, Yale Consulting and Yale Data Management Consultants.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total external spending by his Department was on public-private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202429]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport (including Executive Agencies) expenditure on external PPP consultants was £23,995,700 in 2003–04 and £14,377,300 to date in 2004–05. This total includes expenditure on PFI consultants.

The Department does not retain information on the full time equivalent consultants these figures represent, or on the number of billed consultant hours. Consultants are appointed on a variety of terms only some of which are based on staff numbers or time. These reasons also prevent us from calculating an average cost per consultant.

The firms employed by the Department over this period were:

Atis Real Weatherall, Atkins Management Consultants, WS Atkins, Aukett, Berwin Leighton Painser, Bullen, Carl Bro IBI, Citigroup, Close Resources, CMS Cameron McKenna, Credit Suisse First Boston, CTRL Discretionary Purchase Auditor, CTRL Technical Disputes Panel, Deloitte, Denton Wilde Sapte, Dresdener Kleinwort, Ernst & Young, Flint & Neill, Halcrow, Michael Hamilton, Hays Accountancy Personnel, Hedra, Hyder Consulting, IBM UK, KHHD, Jacobs, JKL & Hide Recruitment, John Matchett, Mott MacDonald, Mott Parsons Gibb, MVM Recruitment, Nabarro Nathanson, Office of Government Commerce, Owen Williams, Panell Kerr Forster, Partnerships UK, Pell Frischmann, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Project Management Recruitment, Qinetiq, Turner & Townsend, Willis, Yale Consulting and Yale Data Management Consultants.

Driving (Drugs)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he takes to advise the public on the possible effects on driving whilst taking *(a)* benzodiazepines, *(b)* tricyclic antidepressants and *(c)* anti histamines; and if he will make a statement. [204022]

Mr. Jamieson: Doctors and pharmacists should provide information on the effects on driving when dispensing prescriptions or other medicines. The current licensing system places a legal obligation on the applicant/licence holder to notify The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) of any medical condition which may affect their fitness to drive.

DVLA provides advice to medical professionals through its "At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive", which is available on the Agency's website (www.dvla.gov.uk).

The Department is presently researching the attitudes of UK health professionals about providing 'fitness-to-drive' advice to the public. This includes an examination of advice given in relation to medication.

European Railway Agency

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he last met the Chairman of the Board of the European Railway Agency; and if he will make a statement on *(a)* the work of the Agency and *(b)* its relationship to the work of (i) the Strategic Rail Authority, (ii) the Office of the Rail Regulator and (iii) other bodies working within the railway industry which have statutory powers. [204124]

Mr. McNulty: There are no plans to meet the Chairman of the Board of the European Rail Agency.

The principal roles of the European Rail Agency established under Council Regulation 881/2004 are:

to propose draft Technical Specifications on Interoperability (TSIs) (taking over from an industry co-ordinated process);

to propose Common Safety Measures (CSMs) and Common Safety Targets (CSTs) which are brought into force through a comitology process;

to undertake technical examinations on request from the Commission, on the compatibility of new national safety rules with TSIs or CSMs, and to submit an opinion to the Commission if it considers that any rule is incompatible with TSIs or CSMs, or does not allow CSTs to be reached;

to provide, on request, technical opinions on safety-related matters referred to it by national regulatory bodies.

The Agency was effectively only established in May 2004, following the adoption of Regulation 881/2004 on 29 April 2004, and has yet to start work. It is established as an advisory body for the European Commission with no autonomous executive powers, and therefore has no regulatory or statutory role in the UK.

The TSIs, CSMs and CSTs replace existing industry-developed standards methods and targets rather than UK statutory provisions or regulatory roles. Enforcement of compliance with TSIs is the responsibility of the national Safety Authority.

David Waboso from the Strategic Rail Authority is the UK Government's representative on the Administrative Board of the Agency.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary Session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202561]

Charlotte Atkins: The effective handling of parliamentary questions is an issue to which I and ministerial colleagues attach great importance.

This Department aims to answer named day questions on the day specified and ordinary written questions within five working days of them appearing on the Order Paper.

The information provided is in respect of the period since the formation of this Department on 29 May 2002.

Road Noise

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of the trunk road network has been resurfaced with quieter surfaces pursuant to the policy announced on 17 October 2001; and what percentage will be resurfaced in each of the next three years. [203791]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: The Highways Agency estimates that overall 27 per cent. of the trunk road network has been resurfaced with quieter surfaces. The Highways Agency is currently reviewing the programme for quieter surfaces over the next three years.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of the schemes for resurfacing concrete trunk roads with quieter materials which were announced by the Highways Agency on 17 October 2001 have been completed; and at what cost. [203792]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: The announcement on 17 October 2001 detailed a list of concrete road schemes planned for resurfacing, together with confirmation that further studies were underway to identify additional sites that met the criteria for quieter surfacing.

19 schemes have been completed at a total cost of £141.6 million.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the trunk roads with concrete surfaces which have been opened since June 1988; what the results were of noise surveys in respect of each; and whether the actual noise levels recorded were significantly higher than those predicted at the time of the public inquiry. [203993]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* The surveys that the Highways Agency undertook on trunk roads with concrete surfaces opened since June 1988 measured the average noise levels arising from vehicles and compared these with the average predicted noise levels used at public inquiry, or public consultation where no inquiry was required. The differences between measurements and predictions for these roads are given in the following table:

Road	*Road length (km)*	*Noise difference (dB)*
M18: Junction 5–6	2.3	1.3
M20: Junction 9–8	20.4	3.0
M23: Junction 10–9 northbound	1.3	-0.7
M1-A1 Link	15.5	5.2
A11: Besthorpe-Wymondham Bypass	13.7	3.1
A13: A1306 to M25 J30	3.0	0.6
A27: Chichester-Havant	13.8	4.6
A30: Honiton-Exeter	16.2	3.7
A34: Peartree-Weston	8.0	5.7
A35: Tolpuddle-Puddleton	7.2	2.6
A50: Doveridge Bypass	4.0	4.5
A50: Derby Southern Bypass	0.5	1.0
A50: Foston-Hatton-Hilton Bypass	3.6	-0.4
A52: Bottesford Bypass	4.8	1.7
A249: M2-Iwade	7.9	1.6
A419/A417: Cirencester and Latton Bypasses	14.2	5.0
A483: B5445 to Welsh boundary	3.1	2.6

The criterion of significance applied to differences in noise levels is 3 dB and this criterion was met by eight of the roads surveyed.

Road Safety

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's publicity budget for road safety is in the current year; and what his Department's expenditure on road safety publicity was in each of the last seven years. [203989]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* The Department's publicity budget for road safety has increased from circa £6 million in 1997 to a budget of £14.1 million in this fiscal year, reflecting the increased commitment to publicity outlined in "Tomorrow's Roads Safer for Everyone" which was published in 2000 and set out the Government's road safety strategy and casualty reduction targets for 2010.

The current Department for Transport was created in May 2002. Road safety publicity figures to support the THINK! road safety campaign were £14.9 million and £13.4 million in 2003–04 and 2002–03 respectively. Given Departmental reorganisations, individual figures for each of the last seven years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Road Traffic Accidents

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents resulted in *(a)* death and *(b)* serious injury in the most recent year for which figures are available; and in how many cases (i) the victim was aged under 15 and (ii) a driver over the age of 70 was involved. [203904]

Mr. Jamieson: In 2003, there were 3,247 road traffic accidents that resulted in at least one fatality. Of these, 269 involved at least one casualty aged under 15, and 251 involved at least one driver or rider aged over 70.

There were 28,913 road traffic accidents in 2003 that resulted in at least one serious injury (but no fatalities). Of these, 3,847 involved at least one casualty aged under 15, and 1,129 involved at least one driver or rider aged over 70.

Personal injury road accident data in Great Britain are collected by the police and reported to the Department using the STATS 19 accident report format. Results are published in detail in "Road Casualties Great Britain—Annual Report". The report for 2003 was published on 30 September 2004 and a copy placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what proportion of road traffic accidents the victim was *(a)* a pedestrian and *(b)* a cyclist in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by age. [203905]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

Accidents involving at least one pedestrian casualty: GB 2003

Accidents/Percentage

Age group	*Number*	*Percentage*[1]
0–15	12,235	43
16–59	17,037	10
60 +	4,926	19

[1] Accidents involving pedestrian casualties as a percentage of all accidents involving a casualty of that age group.

Accidents involving at least one pedal cyclist casualty: GB 2003

Accidents/Percentage

Age group	*Number*	*Percentage*[1]
0–15	4,685	17
16–59	10,657	6
60 +	933	4

[1] Accidents involving pedal cyclists casualties as a percentage of all accidents involving a casualty of that age group.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his latest estimate is of the number of *(a)* fatal, *(b)* serious and *(c)* non-serious injuries thought to have been caused by mobile phone use by (i) cyclists and (ii) other road users in a year. [203956]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is not available.

Roadside Drug Tests

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the powers under the Railways and Transport

Safety Act 2003 to carry out roadside drug tests will be utilised; and if he will make a statement. [203990]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* Section 6B(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended by the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003) requires the Secretary of State to issue a Code of Practice that trained police officers must use when administering roadside preliminary impairment testing, such as the 'walk and turn test'. This will be issued shortly to all police forces in Great Britain and will enable them to require drivers to take part in such testing, which is designed to help officers reach a judgment whether a driver may be impaired.

The police will be further assisted in dealing with suspect drivers when they are able to undertake preliminary testing at the roadside for the presence of drugs under section 6C of the Act. That requires equipment that must be type approved. The specification for type approval is in preparation by the Home Office who hope that it will be finalised in the first half of next year. Once devices are type approved, the police will be able to use them.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people killed in motor accidents in each of the last 10 years had illegal drugs present in their body at the time of the accident; and how many of these were *(a)* vehicle drivers, *(b)* vehicle passengers, *(c)* motor cyclists, *(d)* cyclists and *(e)* pedestrians. [203991]

Mr. Jamieson: *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* This information is not collected by the police. A study by TRL Ltd. on behalf of the Department and published in 2000 surveyed a sample of fatal road accident victims for the presence of drugs, and alcohol, from 1996 to 2000. That gave figures for the victims covered by the study where traces of any drugs (legal and illegal) were found in their body. The figures reproduced in the table are taken from that study. The presence of drugs is not evidence of accident causation, though there may be an association. The full report (TRL495) is available on-line at www.trl.co.uk/1024/mainpage.asp?page = 141.

All drug use: by road user group

	Drivers	*Riders*	*Passengers*	*Pedestrians*	*Cyclists*	*Total*
Total	533	246	222	149	34	1,184
No drugs						
Number	411	196	144	119	29	899
Percentage	77.1	79.7	64.9	79.9	85.3	—
Single drug						
Number	92	33	60	22	3	210
Percentage	17.3	13.4	27.0	14.8	8.8	—
Multiple drugs						
Number	30	17	18	8	2	75
Percentage	5.6	6.9	8.1	5.4	5.9	—

Search and Rescue

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much public expenditure has been spent in each financial year since 1997–98 on search and rescue activities, broken down by *(a)* civil aeronautical and *(b)* maritime activities; [201204]

(2) how many members of staff were working in each financial year since 1997–98 on search and rescue activities, broken down by *(a)* civil aeronautical and *(b)* maritime activities. [201205]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport has overall policy responsibility for both maritime and civil aeronautical search and rescue in the UK search and rescue region. The organisation of search and rescue is an amalgam of civil, military, maritime and aeronautical assets. The difficulty of separating these different aspects should be borne in mind when considering this answer.

The public expenditure for maritime search and rescue is given in the following table for the period since the Maritime and Coastguard Agency was established. The very substantial contributions to maritime search and rescue made by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution are not included.

	Actual public expenditure[1] on maritime search and rescue activities (nearest £ million)
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	30
1999–2000	30
2000–01	35
2001–02	36
2002–03	39
2003–04	40

[1] Capital expenditure is not included.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency had the following numbers of staff working on maritime search and rescue activities.

Number

	Employees[1]	*Auxiliary coastguards*
1997–98	539.0	3,115
1998–99	548.0	3,127
1999–00	607.5	3,150
2000–01	607.7	3,285
2001–02	588.4	3,306
2002–03	574.3	3,359
2003–04	577.2	3,427

[1] All available uniformed coastguards , full-time equivalents.

Note:

These are the average numbers of staff employed during the year. The data for 1997–98 refer to HM Coastguard.

The Ministry of Defence provides declared search and rescue facilities to cover military operations, exercises and training with the UK Search and Rescue Region. Although these resources are established for military purposes, it is the Ministry's policy to render assistance whenever possible to other persons, aircraft or vessels in distress. In addition to the expenditure given above my Department reimburses the Ministry of Defence for the costs of using some of its military assets for civil aeronautical and maritime search and rescue. Since 1998–99 this has amounted to an average of £1.7 million each year.

The Department does not fully distinguish between public expenditure on civil aeronautical and maritime search and rescue. Additionally, the Ministry of Defence make further contributions to civil aeronautical and maritime search and rescue but the data is not held centrally, and to calculate it could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203494]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department was formed in May 2002. Since then, special advisers have not given any speeches in their official capacity. If speeches were to be made these would be conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for special advisers.

Station Car Parks

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the increases in car park charges at rail stations run by South Eastern Trains; and if he will make a statement. [203018]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) have received correspondence about car park charges at stations run by South Eastern Trains. While certain key fares are regulated through the SRA's franchise agreements with train operators, car parking charges are not. The Government therefore have no locus in the matter.

Thameslink

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much per commuter mile was paid by Thameslink to the Government in each of the last three years; what the total payments from Thameslink have been in each of the last three years; if he will change the contractual arrangements with Thameslink so that such contributions from commuters are not required; and if he will make a statement. [203640]

Mr. McNulty: Information on franchise payment/subsidy by year and per passenger kilometre for each train operating company is published in the Strategic Rail Authority's Annual Reports. Copies are placed in the Library of the House. There are no plans to change the contractual terms of Thameslink's franchise.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated cost of the Thameslink 2000 project is; and if he will make a statement. [203588]

Mr. McNulty: The estimated cost of the Thameslink upgrade project is £3 billion.

Thelwall Viaduct

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on repair works to the M6 Thelwall viaduct; and if he will make a statement. [203756]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency's plans for a phased re-opening of the M6 Motorway Thelwall Viaduct, commencing prior to Christmas 2004.

The Highways Agency has been working to achieve the earliest possible completion of the bearing replacement works to allow full re-opening of the viaduct. I am pleased to report that the final few bearings are now being put into place on the viaduct and, subject to final checks, the agency hope to re-open the northbound viaduct on 20 December.

Further resurfacing works will be required on the northbound carriageway and this work will be carried out before the viaduct is opened to traffic. If this work is delayed due to adverse weather conditions, it will be carried out at night to minimise inconvenience to motorists and will start immediately before Christmas and finish early in the new year.

Following the re-opening of the northbound viaduct, after the resurfacing works are complete, work will start on the southbound viaduct to replace the worn out road surfacing and expansion joints. This work will take place over the Christmas and new year period and will continue throughout January and into early February, and involve continuously running three narrow lanes. The speed restrictions of 40 mph will remain in place during this time. When this work is completed, during February 2005, the southbound viaduct can also be fully re-opened.

Traffic Speed Limits

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he plans to enable local authorities to display traffic speed limit repeater signs on all main and through roads. [204180]

Mr. Jamieson: Local authorities are already required to place speed limit repeater signs on those roads where a local speed limit has been implemented by Order. Repeater signs are however strictly prohibited on street lit roads where a 30mph speed limit is in force (Restricted Roads) and unlit roads where the national speed limit is in force. This removes the need to sign every road in the country. This provision has been in place for many years and research shows the current arrangement is well understood

HOME DEPARTMENT

Budd Inquiry

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what facilities are being made available to Sir Alan Budd to *(a)* see papers and *(b)* question individuals in connection with the inquiry into the conduct of the Home Secretary; and under what statutory authority these facilities will be made available; [202178]

(2) under what statutory authority Sir Alan Budd will carry out his inquiry into the conduct of the Home Secretary. [202631]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* No statutory authority is necessary for this investigation. Home Office officials are providing the material that Sir Alan Budd requests and answering the questions that he may ask. The Home Office has provided the secretarial support that Sir Alan Budd requested.

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether Sir Alan Budd will be remunerated for carrying out his inquiry on the conduct of the Home Secretary; [202632]

(2) who is reimbursing the expenses of Sir Alan Budd in connection with his inquiry into the conduct of the Home Secretary. [202750]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Sir Alan will not be remunerated for his investigation but the Home Office will reimburse him for expenses related to the conduct of it.

CCTV (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on CCTV in the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last five years. [201851]

Ms Blears: Between 1999 and 2002 the Home Office gave a total of £311,500 to the London borough of Wandsworth under the Close Circuit Television initiatives, which formed part of the Crime Reduction Programme.

Since the completion of the Crime Reduction Programme, crime reduction funding has been allocated directly to the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership through the Building Safer Communities Fund and to the police Basic Command Unit (BCU) through the BCU fund. These funding streams finance a variety of interventions, including CCTV, to tackle local crime priorities. Information about the exact allocation of that funding is not held centrally.

Community Support Officers

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers are in post; and how many he expects will be in post in each month up to March 2005. [203282]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* At the end of September there were 4,199 community support officers (CSOs) in post. We do not monitor CSO recruitment on a monthly basis but we expect that there will be at least 5,500 CSOs in post by the end of March 2005. Forces are recruiting to fill the CSO posts allocated to them under the third round of CSO funding, announced in May, and also the additional CSOs posts allocated under the first round of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund, which were announced on 23 November.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [200756]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office has interpreted accounting services to mean all services provided by professionally qualified accountants whether employed or bought in. The method of accounting for accountant salaries and bought in services does not allow for these to be separately identified from central records. It is not possible to provide this information without disproportionate costs being incurred.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff were employed by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies in each year from April 1997 to April 2004; what the reasons are for the change in staff numbers; and if he will make a statement. [200248]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 1 December 2004]:* The following table provides the number of staff employed in the Home Office and its agencies from April 1997 to April 2004.

Department/agency	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Non-agency Home Office (including Immigration and Nationality but excluding Executive agencies)	9,358	8,037	7,711	9,270	13,020	13,550	16,540	18,780
Prison Service	37,704	39,363	38,719	40,560	41,940	41,780	43,210	45,280
United Kingdom Passport Agency (UKPA)	1,407	1,276	1,245	1,320	2,270	2,770	2,600	2,450
Criminal Records Bureau	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	340
Forensic Science Service	1,185	1,238	1,638	1,780	2,190	2,420	2,660	2,450
Asset Recovery Agency	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90
Fire Service College	215	253	188	180	190	—	—	—

Note:
All figures within the table are full-time equivalents of permanent staff and this information can be found on the Cabinet Office website: up to 1 September 2003, Criminal Records Bureau figures were incorporated within those for the United Kingdom Passport Office.

Changes in the numbers of permanent civil servants reflect the operational needs within Immigration and Nationality, UKPA and the Prison Service. Staff numbers in the non-agency Home Office have changed

mostly in Immigration and Nationality where there had been significant increases in asylum applications, leave to remain decisions, the transfer in of the responsibility for processing work permits and the increased number of staff in border controls. Staff numbers in UKPA have changed as a result of the increased workloads. Staff numbers Prison Service have changed as a result of the growth of the prison population.

The Government remain committed to reducing the size of the Home Office headquarters by the equivalent of 2,700 posts by 2007–08 and these changes will be reflected in future staff levels.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199629]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office takes the issue of accessibility very seriously and we do strive to maintain usability and accessibility standards on all our websites.

We recently commissioned an audit of a selection of our sites against the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and have embarked on a programme of work to implement changes where necessary. This is being run alongside a bigger programme of website rationalisation and redevelopment which will be completed in 2005

Home Office (Lighting)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason the lights in the new Home Office building in Marsham street are being left on for 24 hours a day; and if he will make a statement on the energy efficiency of lighting on the Home Office estate. [199574]

Fiona Mactaggart: The developer is currently commissioning the building at 2 Marsham Street. This involves 24 hour working to test building system—hence the lighting required. 2 Marsham street is due to be handed over to the Home Office on 26 January 2005 and until then the developer will meet the costs of the electricity. When the building becomes operational, the lighting system will sense movement and will not operate unless people are present. The contract requires Anne's Gate Property, our PFI partner, to operate the building at levels that are at least 10 per cent. below the best practice benchmark in the Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme Energy Use in Offices Guide.

The Home Office is committed to reducing energy consumption across its estate. As part of the cross Government targets contained in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate, the Department will benchmark its key sites to identify those, which have the highest consumption per square metre. Energy surveys will be undertaken at those sites and no cost/low cost measures implemented. Best practice guidance will also be disseminated to building managers.

The Home Office undertook a campaign earlier this year, aimed at encouraging staff to switch off lights, IT and electrical equipment. This involved a poster competition, articles on the Department's intranet and in-house magazine.

Home Office Legislation

Mr. Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all Home Office Bills that have been enacted since May 1997. [200142]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Since the 1997 General Election 45 Bills on Home Office policy areas have received Royal Assent. These are:

Royal Assent received during the 1997–98 Session

Firearms (Amendment) (No.2) Act—Royal Assent received 27 November 1997

Special Immigration Appeals Commission Act—Royal Assent received 17 December 1997

Criminal Justice (International Co-Operation) Act—Royal Assent received 9 July 1998

Data Protection Act—Royal Assent received 16 July 1998

Crime and Disorder Act—Royal Assent received 31 July 1998

Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Act—Royal Assent received September 1998

Human Rights Act—Royal Assent received 9 November 1998

Registration of Political Parties Act—Royal Assent received 19 November 1998

Royal Assent received during the 1998–99 Session

European Parliamentary Elections Act—Royal Assent received 14 January 1999

Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act—Royal Assent received 30 June 1999

Football (Offences and Disorder) Act—Royal Assent received 27 July 1999

Criminal Cases Review (Insanity) Act—Royal Assent received 27 July 1999

Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act—Royal Assent received 27 July 1999

Immigration and Asylum Act—Royal Assent received 11 November 1999

Royal Assent received during the 1999–2000 Session

Representation of the People Act—Royal Assent received 9 March 2000

Terrorism Act—Royal Assent received 20 July 2000

Football (Disorder) Act—Royal Assent received 28 July 2000

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act—Royal Assent received 28 July 2000

Licensing (Young Persons) Act—Royal Assent received 23 November 2000

Disqualifications Act—Royal Assent received 30 November 2000

Freedom of Information Act—Royal Assent received 30 November 2000

Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act—Royal Assent received 30 November 2000

Race Relations (Amendment) Act—Royal Assent received 30 November 2000

Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act—Royal Assent received 30 November 2000

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act—Royal Assent received 30 November 2000

Royal Assent received during the 2000–01 Session

Vehicles (Crime) Act—Royal Assent received 10 April 2001

Election Publications Act—Royal Assent received 10 April 2001

Elections Act—Royal Assent received 10 April 2001

Criminal Justice and Police Act—Royal Assent received 11 May 2001

House of Commons (Removal of Clergy Disqualification) Act—Royal Assent received 11 May 2001

Private Security Industry Act—Royal Assent received 11 May 2001

Royal Assent received during the 2001–02 Session

Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act—Royal Assent received 13 December 2001

Football Disorder (Amendment) Act—Royal Assent received 1 May 2002

Proceeds of Crime Act—Royal Assent received 24 July 2002

Police Reform Act—Royal Assent received 24 July 2002

Mobile Telephones (Reprogramming) Act—Royal Assent received 24 July 2002

Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act—Royal Assent received 7 November 2002

Royal Assent received during the 2002–03 Session

Criminal Justice Act—Royal Assent received 20 November 2003

Sexual Offences Act—Royal Assent received 20 November 2003

Crime (International Co-operation) Act—Royal Assent received 30 October 2003

Extradition Act—Royal Assent received 20 November 2003

Anti-Social Behaviour Act—Royal Assent received 20 November 2003

Female Genital Mutilation Act—Royal Assent received 30 October 2003

Royal Assent received during the 2003–04 Session

Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act Royal Assent received 22 July 2004

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act—Royal Assent received 15 November 2004

Parliamentary Questions

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many written parliamentary questions tabled in the last Session of Parliament were answered by his Department with the response 'it has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation'. [199970]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 2 December 2004]*: The total number of written questions that were answered with the response, "It has not proved possible to respond to the hon. Member in the time available before Prorogation" was 245. Of these, 171 were tabled in the five days leading up to prorogation.

The Department did provide substantive answers to 496 parliamentary questions in the four days up to Prorogation.

Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively in accordance with performance guidelines and especially before Prorogation. However this is not always possible. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this Session.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many questions to his Department remained unanswered at prorogation; and what percentage of these Questions had been tabled *(a)* less than one month, *(b)* between one and three months and *(c)* more than three months previously; [200195]

(2) what the average time taken by his Department to respond to a written parliamentary question was in the last parliamentary Session. [200196]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The total number of written questions for which a substantive answer was not provided before the end of Session was 245. Of which 171 were tabled in the five days leading up to Prorogation. The Department did provide substantive answers to 496 parliamentary questions in the four days up to Prorogation. The number and percentage of these unanswered questions tabled less than one month, between one and three months and more than three months previously are provided in the table:

	Number	*Percentage*
Number of PQs tabled less than one month	205	84
Between one and three months	26	10
Over three months	14	6
Total	245	

Note:
Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively in accordance with performance guidelines and especially before Prorogation. However this is not always possible. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Departmental records show that the average time to respond to a written parliamentary question during the last Session was 14 days.

Police Stations (Essex)

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police stations in Essex which have been *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed in each year since 1979. [199706]

Ms Blears: The management of the police estate and allocation of resources are matters for each police authority and the chief officer.

Port Security

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on providing security at ports in each year since 1997, broken down by location. [203529]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The costs of providing security measures at ports are borne directly by industry and the information is not held centrally. The Department is conscious of the costs associated with implementing measures designed to increase security and will continue to work closely with industry to ensure that the required measures are proportionate, pragmatic and sustainable.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [203470]

(2) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201297]

(3) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged. [201380]

Mr. Blunkett: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Stolen Dogs

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of dogs stolen in England in each of the last three years. [201903]

Ms Blears: This information is not collected centrally.

DEFENCE

Cadet Services

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance is given by his Department to (i) sea cadets, (ii) army cadets and (iii) air cadets. [201987]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence provides the following, in terms of *(a)* financial, and *(b)* further assistance:

Sea Cadets

The Sea Cadets are run and administered by the Marine Society/Sea Cadet Association (the parent charity). The total budget provided to the Marine Society/Sea Cadet Association and direct by MOD is £9.4 million per year. The use of Naval training establishments and sea training days on HM ships is uncosted.

Army Cadets

The Army Cadets are run and administered by the MOD. The total budget provided to the Army Cadets is £50 million, which comprises:

	£ million
Salaries (all forms)	32
Cadets estate programme.	14
Travel and subsistence	1
Cadet activities	3

Further assistance, in the form of the use of Army training establishments and attendance on courses and parades organised and administered by the Regular Army is uncosted.

Air Cadets

The Air Cadets are run and administered by the MOD. The total budget provided to the Air Cadets for 2004–05 is £22 million.

Further assistance in the form of the use of RAF training establishments and attendance on courses and parades organised and administered by the RAF is uncosted.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance was given to cadet units in the south-east of England about carrying firearms on Remembrance Sunday; what role Ministers had in issuing guidance; and if he will make a statement. [199442]

Mr. Caplin: Ministers had no role whatsoever in issuing guidance regarding cadets on Remembrance Sunday. All cadet guidance is issued from the various Cadet Force headquarters.

The Air Training Corps did issue specific instructions that all participants in Remembrance Day parades were not to carry drill weapons. In the south-east, (including Eastbourne) the Sea Cadets were told that it was paramount to harmonise with the prevailing view of the other Cadet Forces. The Army Cadet Force and the Combined Cadet Force do not routinely carry either real or drill weapons on parade. As a consequence, no drill weapons were paraded at the Eastbourne Remembrance Day Parade.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the total external spending by his Department was on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement; [290815]

(2) what the total external spending by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [290814]

Mr. Ingram: The Department maintains a Framework Agreement that provides a list of consultancy companies that have been approved to provide management and related services and legal services consultancy to PPP Integrated Project Teams (IPTs). Companies listed in the Agreement, however, are not always able to provide specialist consultancy services; IPTs are therefore able to engage specialist firms that are not listed in the Framework Agreement.

The use of consultants is monitored but not to the level of detail listed in the question. As a result the information requested in the question is not held centrally and to provide it the Department would incur

disproportionate cost. However, the information that can be provided regarding the use and cost of consultants is as follows:

Use of the Framework Agreement

	Financial year 2002–03		Financial year 2003–04	
Number of companies used	*Invoices submitted*	*Value (£ million)*	*Invoices submitted*	*Value (£ million)*
19	524	24.368	1,187	66.367

In addition, over the two year period, two specialist companies were engaged at a cost of £2.231 million.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by how much his Department's capital budget was underspent in financial year 2003–04. [203653]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Final outturn against the Ministry of Defence's 2003–04 Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit for RfR (Request for resources) (provision of defence capability) is set out at page 35 of the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts (HC 1080). This shows an outturn of £5,648 million against a DEL of £6,088 million; an underspend of £440 million.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes to his Department's depreciation figures occurred between the publication of the 2004 Budget (HC 701, 2003–04) and the pre-Budget report (CM 6408, 2004–05); and if he will make a statement. [203654]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* As explained at paragraph 64 of the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts (HC 1080) the MOD's final asset depreciation figures for 2003–04 were lower than expected because the Quinquennial Review of Fixed Assets necessary under Modified Historic Cost Accounting and carried out towards the end of the financial year resulted in fewer downward valuations, and therefore smaller accelerated depreciated costs, than had been anticipated.

Departmental Telephones

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he has taken to ensure that telephones in his Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [201110]

Mr. Caplin: Direct dial access to international civil numbers is granted only to those staff who require it for the course of their official duties.

Environmental Tectonics

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what consultations his Department has had with Environmental Tectonics Corporation regarding that company's involvement in the Authentic Tactical Flight Simulator project; [202952]

(2) what part human centrifuge technology will play in the proposed Authentic Tactical Flight Simulator project; and what he estimates the cost of this project to be. [202985]

Mr. Ingram: Although Environmental Tectonics Corporation has approached the Ministry of Defence to actively market a Tactical Flight Simulator there have been no consultations with the company on this product and none are planned.

Future Surface Combatant

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the coherency package for British shipyards has had on the decision to reassess the requirement for the Future Surface Combatant. [203292]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Surface Combatant (FSC) project is being reviewed together with all other military maritime programmes as part of the Maritime Coherence study, and a range of options is being considered. The project is, in any case, still in its concept phase. As such no decisions have yet been taken about the timescale for delivering the FSC capability, nor about the platform solution.

Peacekeeping

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list he countries in which British peacekeeping forces are deployed; and how many British peacekeeping forces were employed in peacekeeping operations on the latest date for which figures are available. [203608]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1846W.

Personnel Survey

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library the *(a)* questions asked and *(b)* responses given to the seventh serving personnel survey for the Army conducted in June. [204029]

Mr. Caplin: I can confirm that copies of the questions asked in the seventh Army Serving Personnel survey, and the responses given, will be placed in the Library of the House in the new year.

QinetiQ

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what controls govern the intellectual property rights developed by the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency following its transfer to QinetiQ, with particular reference to confidentiality commitments placed on QinetiQ staff who leave its employ. [202765]

Mr. Ingram: With a few exceptions, intellectual property rights generated within those parts of the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency that were transferred to QinetiQ belong to QinetiQ. MOD retains the right to use this intellectual property free of charge for defence purposes. A procedure is in place that requires QinetiQ to seek MOD pre-clearance to any proposal for the exploitation of any sensitive technology.

Employees of any organisation are free to pursue their careers elsewhere, but have an obligation not to use or disclose confidential information belonging to their ex-employer. In this regard, ex-employees of QinetiQ are no different from ex-employees of any other organisation. Many organisations, including QinetiQ, supplement the

common law position with specific obligations in their terms and conditions of employment. It is also understood that QinetiQ reminds employees of their obligations to maintain confidentiality on leaving QinetiQ's employment and seeks to enforce these obligations if it appears necessary to do so.

The Official Secrets Act also applies to employees of QinetiQ. Employees leaving QinetiQ are reminded of their obligations under the Act.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many research and development procurement opportunities were disseminated by his Department to small and medium-sized enterprises registered through the Small Business Research Initiative web portal in each year since 2001–02, including figures for 2004–05 to date; and what the total value of the opportunities was in each case. [201283]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Suppliers Service acts as a focal point within the Ministry of Defence to provide advice and guidance to companies interested in becoming defence suppliers, either directly or indirectly. They also provide a variety of access media to benefit small and medium sized enterprises comprising helpdesk facility, events and seminars, and web portals; the Small Business Research Initiative web portal is one of these. However, we do not hold centrally the information on dissemination of information through any particular means.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the expenditure was by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible on research and development work by organisations other than university departments, Government-funded research establishments or private sector companies in each year since 2001–02. [201278]

Mr. Ingram: The following table shows total expenditure on R and D activity by *(a)* MOD with its trading fund agencies (which have been taken not to be Government funded research establishments) and *(b)* expenditure on R and D activity by the trading fund agencies themselves other than that undertaken by university departments, Government funded research establishments or private sector companies. This has been presented for the last two financial years for which data are available. Figures for 2003–04 will be published in 2005 by the Office for National Statistics in "Government Expenditure on Research and Development". The term "Department" has been interpreted as the MOD not including its trading fund agencies (ie ABRO, DARA, Met Office, DSTL and Hydrographic Office). This aligns with the MOD Annual Report and Accounts.

Trading fund agency	*£ million*
Departmental R and D expenditure with trading fund agencies—2001–02[1]	
DSTL	276
DERA[2]	173
Met Office	16
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic Office	0
R and D expenditure by MOD trading fund agencies—2001–02[1,3,4] *with other than universities, Government funded research establishments and private companies*	
DSTL	0
DERA[2]	0
Met Office	0
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic Office	0
Departmental R and D expenditure with trading fund agencies—2002–03[1]	
DSTL	296
Met Office	15
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic Office	0
R and D expenditure by MOD trading fund agencies 2002–03[1,3,4] *with other than universities, Government funded research establishments and private companies*	
DSTL	0
Met Office	0.2
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic Office	0

[1] Departmental expenditure figures have been rounded to the nearest £ million, sums spent by trading fund agencies have been rounded to the nearest £100,000.

[2] On 1 July 2001 DERA was split into two organisations: the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) (about a quarter of DERA) staying as a trading fund within MOD, and QinetiQ, the remainder, becoming a private (exframural) company.

[3] Includes expenditure with Industrial Research Associations and small amounts with "others", ie non-profit institutions (such as charities) and individuals performing research but not as a business.

[4] Expenditure by the Department with Industrial Research Associations and "others" is small and has been lost in the roundings.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure on research and development was made by each agency sponsored by his Department in each year since 2001–02; and what percentage this represented of that agency's total expenditure in each year. [201323]

Mr. Ingram: The following tables show total expenditure on external R and D contract activity by MOD agencies who are known to have spent moneys on R and D tasks, and the percentage that this represents in terms of total agency annual turnover. Agencies have been taken as referring to Trading Fund Agencies only. This has been presented for the last two financial years for which data are available. Figures for 2003–04 will be published in 2005 by the Office for National Statistics in "Government Expenditure on Research and Development".

R and D Expenditure by MOD Trading Fund Agencies—2001–02[1,2]

Trading Fund Agencies	*Expenditure on R and D (£ million)*	*Percentage of agency annual turnover*[3]
DSTL/DERA[1]	141.7	28.4
Met Office	1.0	0.6
ABRO	0	—

R and D Expenditure by MOD Trading Fund Agencies—2001–02[1,2]

Trading Fund Agencies	*Expenditure on R and D (£ million)*	*Percentage of agency annual turnover*[3]
DARA	0	—
Hydrographic Office[3]	1.8	3.7

[1] On 1 July 2001 DERA was split into two organisations: the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) (about a quarter of DERA) staying as a Trading Fund within MOD; and QinetiQ, the remainder, becoming a private (extramural) company.

[2] Sums spent by trading fund agencies have been rounded to the nearest one hundred thousand pounds.

[3] For UKHO the expenditure is expressed as a percentage of total operating expenditure excluding interest.

R and D Expenditure by MOD Trading Funds Agencies—2002–03[1]

Trading Fund Agencies	*Expenditure on R and D (£ million)*	*Percentage of agency annual turnover*[2]
DSTL	73.4	21.4
Met Office	1.3	0.8
ABRO	0	—
DARA	0	—
Hydrographic Office[2]	2.1	4.0

[1] Sums spent by trading fund agencies have been rounded to the nearest one hundred thousand pounds.

[2] For UKHO the expenditure is expressed as a percentage of total operating expenditure excluding interest.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent by his Department on research and development in each year since 2001–02; and what percentage of total Departmental expenditure this represented in each year. [201324]

Mr. Ingram: The following table shows total Ministry of Defence expenditure on R and D activity for the last three financial years for which data are available. Figures are inclusive of non-recoverable VAT and presented in £ millions. Because of transitional arrangements with the introduction of Resource Accounting and Budgeting, the figures from the years 2001–02 and 2002–03 are not expressed as a percentage of "Defence Spending". Figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 are expressed as a percentage of the Net Cash Requirement (NCR). The Net Cash Requirement (NCR) is the actual money that MOD requests from the Government in order to fund its activities. The NCR takes account of movements in working capital levels (debtors, creditors, stock) while excluding all non-cash costs.

	MOD Departmental Research and Development expenditure (£ million)	*Percentage of Defence spending*
2001–02	2,057	8
2002–03	2,734	10
2003–04	2,677	9

Defence Spending is defined as the sum of the resource and capital budgets, net of depreciation and impairments.

The term "Department" has been interpreted as the MOD *not including* its Trading Fund Agencies (i.e. ABRO, DARA, Met Office, DSTL and Hydrographic Office). This aligns with the MOD Annual Report and Accounts.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure has been made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible for research and development projects undertaken by overseas Government laboratories or research establishments, including collaborative Government-funded laboratories and research establishments in each year since 2001–02. [201326]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence welcomes collaboration with foreign partners where this will bring benefits to the United Kingdom. In these cases MOD seeks to align UK activities and those of other Governments for mutual benefit, rather than funding overseas bodies that conduct research. The exact breakdown of the total activity is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the central expenditure for facilitating international research collaboration over the period requested is provided in the following table. The figures for 2004–05 represent allocation rather than expenditure.

£ million

Financial year	*Expenditure*
2001–02	5.4
2002–03	6.2
2003–04	6.2
2004–05	[1]6.3

[1] Allocation

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure was made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible for research and development projects undertaken by university departments and research centres in the UK in each year since 2001–02. [201331]

Mr. Ingram: The following table shows total expenditure on R and D activity for *(a)* Ministry of Defence and *(b)* for MOD Trading Fund agencies with universities and/or research centres. This has been presented for the last two financial years for which data are available. Figures for 2003–04 will be published by the Office of National Statistics in "Government Expenditure on Research and Development" in 2005. The term "Department" has been interpreted as the MOD not including its Trading Fund Agencies (i.e. ABRO, DARA, Met Office, DSTL and Hydrographic Office). This aligns with the MOD Annual Report and Accounts.

£ million

	R and D expenditure with universities and research centres[1]
2001–02	
Department	0
Trading fund agencies[2]	
DSTL/DERA[2]	15.7
Met office	0.8
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic office	0

£ million

	R and D expenditure with universities and research centres[1]
2002–03	
Department	0
Trading fund agencies	
DSTL	8.2
Met office	0
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic office	0

[1] Departmental expenditure figures have been rounded to the nearest £ million. Sums spent by trading fund agencies have been rounded to the nearest £100,000.

[2] On 1 July 2001 DERA was split into two organisations: the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) (about a quarter of DERA) staying as a Trading Fund within MOD, and QinetiQ, the remainder, becoming a private (extramural) company.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure was made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible for research and development projects undertaken by private sector companies in each year since 2001–02. [201334]

Mr. Ingram: The following table shows total expenditure on R and D activity for *(a)* MOD and *(b)* MOD agencies which have been undertaken by private sector companies. This has been presented for the last two financial years for which data are available. Figures for 2003–04 will be published in 2005 by the Office of National Statistics in "Government Expenditure on Research and Development". The term "Department" has been interpreted as the MOD not including its Trading Fund Agencies (i.e. ABRO, DARA, Met Office, DSTL and Hydrographic Office). This aligns with the MOD Annual Report and Accounts.

£ million

	R and D expenditure with private sector companies[1]
2001–02	
Department	1,525
Trading fund agencies	
DSTL/DERA[2]	126.0
Met office	0
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic office	1.0
2002–03	
Department	2,412
Trading fund agencies	
DSTL	65.2
Met office	0.4
ABRO	0
DARA	0
Hydrographic office	1.1

[1] Departmental expenditure figures have been rounded to the nearest £ million, sums spent by trading fund agencies have been rounded to the nearest £100,000.

[2] On 1 July 2001 DERA was split into two organisations: the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) (about a quarter of DERAP) staying as a Trading Fund within MOD, and QinetiQ, the remainder, becoming a private (extramural) company.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure was made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible for research and development projects by companies with headquarters (i) in the UK, (ii) in other EU member states and (iii) outside the EU in each year since 2001–02. [201336]

Mr. Ingram: A breakdown of research and development expenditure in this way is not held centrally. Such information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Learning Grants

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many applications for adult learning grants have been made in the North East; how many have been granted; and what the average grant has been. [204412]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since the start of September 2004, 538 applications for the Adult Learning Grant have been received from learners in the North East. 284 applicants have been awarded the weekly grant. 159 applications are under consideration. The average weekly payment of the grant is £29.30 per week.

Fostering

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how he plans to measure the effects of amendments to the notification scheme for private fostering set out in section 44 of the Children Act 2004. [204203]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* The new data collection exercise that was introduced from April 2004 to capture information on private fostering arrangements, together with the results from inspection against the National Minimum Standards to be introduced next year, will be significant in measuring the effects of the amendments to the private fostering notification scheme made by section 44 of the Children Act 2004.

As agreed during the debate on the Children Bill in the House of Lords, at a suitable point during the lifetime of the registration provisions in the Act we will publish a report on the impact of the new measures, including an indication of whether in light of this we are minded to move towards a registration scheme for private foster carers.

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in each local authority have notified their authority that they are acting as private foster carers. [204204]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* A new annual data collection exercise that will capture information on the number of notifications of new

private fostering arrangements received during the year was introduced from April 2004. Data relating to 2004–05 will be published in late 2005.

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people were prosecuted for failing to notify a local authority of their intention privately to foster a child in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04. [204205]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* This information is not collected centrally.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what resources have been allocated to regional Learning and Skills Council offices for *(a)* start up, *(b)* running costs and *(c)* outreach work. [204495]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Skills Agenda

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the role of public sector purchasers in advancing the skills agenda. [204501]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: All good procurement and contract management should be rooted in a very clear understanding of the skills that the contractor needs to demonstrate to deliver the contract outcome we seek. To support this approach, guidance was developed by my Department in November 2003, with the assistance of the Treasury and Office of Government Commerce, to outline how Government Departments working within the scope of the procurement policy and legal framework can consider the literacy, language and numeracy skills required to deliver contracts, and how they can work with prospective and existing contractors to ensure that their staff have, or are able to develop relevant skills.

In July this year the Adult Basic Skills Committee called on Departments to actively embrace this guidance. Many have already provided details of how it has been incorporated into their public sector procurement practices. Departments are currently in the process of preparing a report to demonstrate the actual effect this guidance has had. My Department, in conjunction with others, is looking at how this guidance may be further developed to help promote the wider skills agenda.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he is taking to improve liaison between sector skills councils and the relevant awarding bodies. [204502]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As part of the Government's Skills Strategy, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Learning and Skills Council and the Skills for Business Network are working in partnership with sectors and awarding bodies to develop a new Framework for Achievement.

An essential component of the new Framework will be Sector Qualification Strategies, developed jointly by Sector Skills Councils and awarding bodies.

At least eight Sector Qualification Strategies will be in place by March 2005 and all sectors will have strategies in place by March 2006.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation. [201301]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202260]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There was one official visit abroad by a special adviser in this Department during the specified period, to Belgium, Germany and Poland. The cost of the trip was £743. Information for domestic visits is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Vocational Education/Qualifications

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to expand vocational education and training for adults in Ealing and Acton. [204417]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

The Government's Skills Strategy "21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential" (July 2003), set out its plans for increasing opportunities for adults to develop their skills. In addition, the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report last week announced the extension of our Employer Training Pilots to all areas from 2006/07 and a New Deal for Skills to help the unemployed secure the training they need for sustainable employment.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he is taking in conjunction with the devolved administrations to harmonise vocational qualification frameworks across the UK, with particular reference to the needs of national and EU-based employers. [204497]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK administrations and their regulatory authorities are working very closely together on the reform of vocational qualifications.

Credit development is at the heart of qualifications reform, and is at different stages in different parts of the UK. As the recent Framework for Achievement consultation document shows, we are considering how best to move towards convergence on credit in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We believe that the framework can be developed over time to articulate with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and facilitate credit transfer arrangements with European credit systems.

For employers, the new framework will mean that vocational qualifications are more responsive to their needs. The framework will provide opportunities for employer training to lead to recognised achievements within it, and ensure that what people achieve is relevant to their role as an employee.

Volunteering

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) when he expects to publish a report on the results of his investment of £27 million in volunteering by students announced in 2000; [203200]

(2) what projects have been undertaken as a result of the £27 million investment for volunteering by students he announced in 2000; and how the cost effectiveness of that investment will be assessed. [203201]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The projects undertaken include students volunteering in schools, prisons, hospitals or local community organisations and groups; student volunteers in cultural and sporting events end environmental projects; and student volunteers to coach young people in sport and drama. More than 30,000 people have benefited. The Higher Education Funding council for England will Produce a report in spring 2005 assessing the initiative.

WORK AND PENSIONS

New Deal for the Disabled

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 69W, on the New Deal for the Disabled, what plans he has for the renewal of contracts from April 2006 with those organisations that are contracted to deliver the New Deal for Disabled People. [202192]

Jane Kennedy: All current contracts for New Deal for Disabled People run until March 2006. We are currently considering the most effective way to continue this work with external organisations beyond the end of the current New Deal for Disabled People contract period.

The Chancellor announced in his pre-Budget report on 2 December 2004 that a further £30 million will be allocated to expand the numbers who can benefit from the New Deal for Disabled People.

Pension Credit

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners took up pension credit in October in the constituency of *(a)* Moray, *(b)* Banff and Buchan, *(c)* Tayside North, *(d)* Angus and *(e)* Perth; [199505]

(2) how many pensioners took up pension credit in October in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Scotland. [199508]

Malcolm Wicks: The numbers of pension credit recipients at the end of October in Great Britain, Scotland and the constituencies mentioned is given in the following table.

Pension credit recipients—31 October 2004

	Households	*Individuals*
Great Britain	2,633,550	3,199,040
Scotland	274,225	328,250
Moray	3,555	4,320
Banff and Buchan	3,985	4,875
Tayside North	4,270	5,185
Angus	3,830	4,600
Perth	3,635	4,305

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of Pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.
3. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners his Department estimates are eligible for pension credit in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Scotland; and how many pensioners have taken up pension credit since it was introduced in (i) the UK and (ii) Scotland. [199507]

Malcolm Wicks: We estimate that approximately 3.85 million households in Great Britain, corresponding to approximately 4.95 million individuals, and approximately 350,000 households in Scotland, corresponding to approximately 450,000 individuals, are likely to be eligible for pension credit in 2004–05. These estimates, rounded to the nearest 50,000 households or individuals, are subject to a wide margin of error and should be used as a broad indication of the likely eligible population only. The following table gives the numbers of pension credit recipients in Great Britain and Scotland at the end of October.

Pension credit recipients—31 October 2004

	Households	*Individuals*
Great Britain	2,633,550	3,199,040
Scotland	274,225	328,250

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.

3. A pensioner household is defined as single persons aged 60 or over and couples where at least one partner is aged 60 or over. Individuals are single pensioners with eligibility and both partners in a couple with eligibility.
4. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average payment of pension credit in Strathkelvin and Bearsden is; [202542]

(2) how many people received pension credit in Strathkelvin and Bearsden in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [202543]

Malcolm Wicks: Numbers of pension credit recipients in Strathkelvin and Bearsden in December 2003 and in October 2004 are given in the following table. The average award in Strathkelvin and Bearsden at the end of October was £41.72.

Pension credit recipients, Strathkelvin and Bearsden

	Households	*Individuals*
December 2003	2,295	2,745
October 2004	2,725	3,280

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.
3. Individual recipients may include a small number of partners under age.
4. Pension credit replaced the minimum income guarantee from 6 October 2003.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of the pension credit in each year from 2006–07 to 2011–12 if *(a)* the guarantee element of the pension credit is increased in line with earnings in each year after 2005–06 and the savings credit threshold is increased in line with prices, *(b)* the guarantee element of the pensions credit and the savings credit threshold are both increased in line with prices in each year after 2005–06 and *(c)* the savings and guarantee credits are increased in line with earnings. [203164]

Malcolm Wicks: Estimates for expenditure on pension credit under each of the uprating scenarios laid out in *(a)* to *(c)* are provided for each financial year from 2006–07 to 2011–12 in the following table.

Table 1: Estimated expenditure on pension credit from 2006–07 to 2011–12

£ billion

	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)*
2006–07	7.2	6.5	6.9
2007–08	8.0	6.8	7.6
2008–09	8.7	7.0	8.1
2009–10	9.5	7.3	8.7
2010–11	10.0	7.5	9.5
2011–12	11.0	7.5	10.0

Notes:
1. Figures for 2006–07 to 2009–10 are in billions and rounded to the nearest £0.1 billion. Figures for 2010–11 to 2011–12 are rounded to the nearest £0.5 billion to account for the degree of uncertainty in projecting this far ahead.
2. Overall pensioner income is assumed to rise in line with average earnings.

Sources:
1. Figures for 2006–07 to 2009–10 are based on the Department's medium term forecasts for pension credit. The projections are based on the Department's QSE 5 per cent. administrative data.
2. The figures for 2010–11 to 2011–12 are based on the Departments' policy simulation model and the FRS survey 2002–03 projected forward to the appropriate policy year.

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are in receipt of pension credit in Telford; and if he will estimate how many are entitled to claim and have not done so. [203724]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of people likely to be eligible for pension credit is not available at constituency level. However, we estimate that approximately 400,000 households in the West Midlands, corresponding to approximately 500,000 individuals (rounded to the nearest 50,000), are likely to be eligible for pension credit in 2004–05. Information on the number of pension credit recipients in the West Midlands and Telford is given in the table.

Pension credit recipients—31 October 2004

	Households	*Individuals*
West Midlands	271,860	375,600
Telford	3,720	4,685

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many constituents of Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber have received the pension credit. [204849]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 October 2004 there were 3,780 households, comprising 4,480 individuals, in receipt of pension credit in the Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber constituency.

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.
3. Individual recipients may include a small number of partners under age 60.

Pensioners

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female pensioner recipients of (i) income support, (ii) the minimum income guarantee and (iii) pension credit there have been in each year since 1979. [203169]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is shown in the following three tables.

Table 1: Pensioners in receipt of income support, Great Britain, 1979–98

Number

	Total individual beneficiaries	*Male individual beneficiaries*	*Female individual beneficiaries*
1979	2,039,000	488,000	1,551,000
1980	1,974,000	466,000	1,508,000
1981	2,034,000	482,000	1,553,000
1982	2,089,000	501,000	1,587,000
1983	1,920,000	434,000	1,486,000
1984	1,944,000	442,000	1,502,000
1985	n/a	n/a	n/a
1986	1,973,000	437,000	1,536,000
1987	1,988,000	450,000	1,538,000
1988	2,002,000	534,000	1,468,000
1989	1,843,000	464,000	1,379,000
1990	1,925,000	502,000	1,423,000
1991	1,788,000	448,000	1,340,000
1992	1,872,000	484,000	1,388,000
1993	2,048,000	552,000	1,496,000
1994	2,082,000	575,000	1,507,000
1995	2,067,000	584,900	1,482,100
1996	2,045,100	584,300	1,460,800
1997	1,985,400	565,700	1,419,700
1998	1,911,800	546,500	1,365,300

n/a = Signifies data are unavailable.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Income support replaced supplementary benefit in April 1988.
4. Up to and including 1987, pensioners are defined as claimants of pensionable age. From 1988 pensioners are defined as benefit units where either the claimant and/or partner are aged 60 or over.
5. Unemployed claimants are included in the figures up to and including August 1996. Income support for the unemployed was replaced by income-based jobseeker's allowance in October 1996.
6. Figures are based on sample data and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling error.
7. All figures relate to a point in time. For 1979 the month of the enquiry was November, for 1980 to 1984 the month was December, for 1986 the month was February and for 1987 to 2004 the month was May.
8. From 1999 income support for pensioners became the minimum income guarantee.

Table 2: Minimum income guarantee recipients, Great Britain, 1999–2003

Number

	Total individual beneficiaries	*Male individual beneficiaries*	*Female individual beneficiaries*
May 1999	1,869,600	541,000	1,328,600
November 1999	1,873,700	547,000	1,326,800
November 2000	1,940,400	574,400	1,366,000
November 2001	2,021,700	606,100	1,415,600
November 2002	2,065,600	634,700	1,430,900
October 2003	2,109,200	662,100	1,447,100

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures from May 1999—November 2002 are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
3. Figures from October 2003 are from a 100 per cent. sample.
4. Individual beneficiaries include claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
5. Minimum income guarantee was introduced in April 1999.
6. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee from 6 October 2003.

Table 3: Pension credit recipients, Great Britain, 2003–04

Number

As at October	*Total individual beneficiaries*	*Male individual beneficiaries*	*Female individual beneficiaries*
2003	2,247,605	712,105	1,535,500
2004	3,199,040	1,073,170	2,125,870

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures for October 2003 relate to 17 October 2003. Figures for October 2004 relate to the end of the month.
3. Individual beneficiaries include claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
4. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee from 6 October 2003.

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of *(a)* the minimum income guarantee and *(b)* pension credit there have been in Wirral, west constituency in each year since the inception of each; and what the average value to recipients of each was in each year. [202025]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the following two tables.

Table 1: Minimum income guarantee recipients, Wirral West, 1999–2003

	Households	*Individuals*	*Average amount (£)*
May 1999	2,300	2,500	47.06
November 1999	2,300	2,500	50.37
November 2000	2,400	2,700	52.04
November 2001	2,500	2,800	52.88
November 2002	2,400	2,800	49.32
October 2003	2,500	2,900	48.34

Notes:

1. Figures from May 1999—November 2002 are taken from a five per cent. sample and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
2. The October figures relate to 3 October and are from a 100 per cent. sample.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
4. Individual recipients include claimants and partners only and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
5. Minimum income guarantee was introduced in April 1999
6. Minimum income guarantee was replaced by pension credit from 6 October 2003.
7. Average amounts of minimum income guarantee fell in April 2002 because of the transfer of residential care and nursing homes reserved rights funding to local authorities.

Table 2: Pension credit recipients, Wirral West, 2003–04

As at October	*Households*	*Individuals*	*Average amount (£)*
2003	2,805	3,315	44.29
2004	3,825	4,600	40.63

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.
3. The October 2003 figure is at 17 October 2003. The October 2004 figure is for the end of the month.

4. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee from 6 October 2003.

5. Individual recipients include claimants and partners only and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.

6. Pension credit average amounts are lower than minimum income guarantee average amounts for three main reasons:

(a) Some recipients of pension credit receive the savings element only, for which there was no equivalent in minimum income guarantee. The maximum award of the savings element is £15.51 for single pensioners and £20.22 for couples.

(b) Funding of child allowances was transferred to the child tax credit on 6 October 2003.

(c) Residential allowance funding was transferred to local authorities on 6 October 2003.

Unemployment (Lewisham)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he has taken to reduce unemployment in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency since 2001 among *(a)* young people, *(b)* disabled people, *(c)* lone parents and *(d)* the long-term unemployed. [201108]

Jane Kennedy: As a result of a combination of economic stability and our radical labour market policies unemployment in Lewisham Deptford has reduced by 12 per cent. since 2001 and now stands at 2,949, with long-term unemployment reduced by 35 per cent. to 585.

Our New Deal programmes administered by Jobcentre Plus have been a great success helping over 600 young people, over 600 long-term unemployed and 200 disabled people in Lewisham Deptford into work.

Lewisham Deptford also benefits from the Government's Welfare to Work 'Action Team initiative' that provides tailored support to disadvantaged customers within the community through an outreach advisory approach.

There have been ongoing activities specific to Lewisham Deptford to help local people into work. Local initiatives have included a Disability Jobsfair at Charlton Athletic Football ground in September 2004 and there is a weekly attendance by Deptford Disability Employment Adviser at Speedwell Mental Health Centre.

Lone Parent Advisers and Childcare Partnership Managers offer additional help to people in Lewisham via a variety of pilots and partnerships, in particular the TryChildcare team. Recent events have been held with New Deal for Communities, Opening Doors, Inland Revenue, the Lewisham Action Team and the North Lewisham Children's Centre.

US Navy

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received regarding the downsizing of the US Navy operations in London and the consequences on employment in London. [202302]

Jane Kennedy: No representations have been received.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many constituents of Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber have received the winter fuel payment. [204848]

Malcolm Wicks: For winter 2003–04 there were 17,945 constituents in Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber who received a winter fuel payment. We would expect the number to be similar for winter 2004–05.

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. samples.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received winter fuel payments in *(a)* Burnley and *(b)* Lancashire in 2004. [204504]

Malcolm Wicks: For winter 2003–04 there were 16,885 people in Burnley who received a winter fuel payment and 240,640 people in Lancashire. We expect the numbers for winter 2004–05 to be similar.

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. samples.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Aggregates

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account is taken of the description of a special landscape area in connection with the selection of land for gravel and aggregate production; and what recent advice his Department has circulated to local authorities on this. [204493]

Keith Hill: Draft Minerals Policy Statement 1 "Planning and Minerals" (MPS1), is the most recent advice the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has sent to local planning authorities about minerals extraction and special landscape areas. It states that one of the Government's key objectives for minerals planning is to protect nationally designated areas of landscape from minerals development (that is National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), other than in exceptional circumstances. It also indicates that Mineral Planning Authorities should have regard generally to the need to protect the wider undeveloped countryside and seek to minimise the impact of minerals development on its quality and character. Mineral planning authorities will have to take into account MPS1, as they prepare their development plans and consider the selection of any sites for minerals development. In respect of landscape protection, proposed policies in MPS1 are not materially different from existing policy in Minerals Planning Guidance Notes 1 and 6.

Childcare Allowances

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what level of childcare allowance is available for elected members serving on *(a)* county, *(b)* unitary, *(c)* Metropolitan boroughs and *(d)* borough and district local authorities. [203767]

Mr. Raynsford: The level of allowance for childcare and other care of dependants is for each local authority to decide, having had regard to the recommendations of its independent remuneration panel. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collate information on the levels of allowance that local authorities have made available.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202458]

Phil Hope: The cost of criminal damage to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's office buildings in the last two years has been:

	£
2002–03	6,100
2003–04	6,500

These costs include the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's agencies and the Government Office Network. Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of ten Government Departments.

The Rent Service became an Executive Agency of the Department for Work and Pensions on 1 April 2004, but was part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the period in question.

Email

Mr. Maude: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for all announcements and publications issued by his Department and those public bodies reporting to him. [203682]

Phil Hope: Most announcements and publications issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are placed on the info4local website—www.info4local.gov.uk which provides an automatic e-mail notification facility.

There is also a separate facility on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website to subscribe to an e-mail alert for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's news releases—http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/newslist.cgi

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202405]

Phil Hope: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Minister's public engagements.

Housing and Employment Services Mobility Project

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress in developing the Housing and Employment Services Mobility project. [204653]

Keith Hill: Good progress is being made on the development of the Housing Employment Mobility Service (HEMS). Scout Solutions Projects Ltd. (SSPL) was awarded the contract in February. The existing HOMES and LAWN mobility services have been provided by SSPL since 2 May. New services will be launched in early 2005.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202466]

Phil Hope: The Human Rights Act has not given rise to a great deal of specific litigation; HR points are most often taken in support of other causes of action. This makes them very difficult to count separately. In addition, the subjects of the convention rights themselves are, to a very great extent, already actionable in existing domestic law.

For these reasons it would not be possible to apportion costs and compensation payments as requested without reviewing all the cases handled by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister since its formation in 2002, which would give rise to disproportionate cost.

Local Government Finance

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will rank each local authority in England by the percentage of total expenditure financed by council tax in 2003–04. [204063]

Mr. Raynsford: The information has been made available in the Library of the House.

The data are taken from the Revenue Account budget form for 2003–04.

Total expenditure is taken to be revenue expenditure financed from revenue support grant, special and specific grants within Aggregate External Finance, non-domestic rates, police grant and general Greater London authority grant.

Ministerial Tour

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether civil servants accompanied him on his tour of the North East on 1 November. [204590]

Mr. Raynsford: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister was accompanied by one special adviser. No other civil servants accompanied him.

Mortgages

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average proportion of household income spent on mortgages by first-time buyers buying property within the Greater London area was in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [203629]

Keith Hill: First-time buyers who purchased property within the Greater London area during 2003 faced mortgage repayments equivalent to an estimated 22.6 per cent. of their income. The equivalent figure for first-time buyers for the whole of the United Kingdom was 19.9 per cent.

Notes:

1. The incomes of first-time buyers are as recorded on their mortgage application forms and will include single or combined incomes depending on whether they were single or joint buyers. The information is derived from mortgage completions data obtained through the Survey of Mortgage Lenders.
2. The basis for the calculation is that all mortgages applied for were repayment mortgages (as opposed to an interest-only mortgages). For buyers who actually opted for an interest-only mortgage, their repayments as a percent of their income would have been slightly lower.

North-east Referendum

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what European Parties Elections and Referendums Network funds were used in support of the recent referendum in the North East. [204069]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Expenditure by permitted participants in national and regional referendums is a matter for the Electoral Commission.

Planning Delivery Grant

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Planning Delivery Grant has been allocated to each local authority in each year since its creation. [204488]

Keith Hill: A table with the information requested has been made available in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what criteria are used for the allocation of Planning Delivery Grant to individual local authorities in England. [204489]

Keith Hill: Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to all local planning authorities in England on 18 May this year setting out the broad criteria for allocation of Planning Delivery Grant 2005–06 a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. We will shortly issue a document consulting on the detailed criteria for allocation.

Seaside and Country Homes Scheme

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many and what size properties were released by nominees from London boroughs to the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04, broken down by local authority; [202920]

(2) how many applicants were on the waiting list for a nomination to a property under the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme on *(a)* 1 April 2003 and *(b)* 1 April 2004; [202921]

(3) what the average length of time was between an application for rehousing under the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme and nomination to a property in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [202922]

Keith Hill: On the average length of time taken between an application for rehousing and nomination to a Seaside and Country Home (SCH) property, the information requested is not held centrally and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

On SCH waiting list:

The number of applicants that were on the waiting list for a nomination to a property under the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme on *(a)* 1 April 2003 and *(b)* 1 April 2004 was:

(a) 499

(b) 388

The breakdown of the number of applicants on the waiting lists at *(a)* and *(b)* according to year of registration is available in the Library of the House. On the number of households rehoused under the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme by property size and local authority is also available in the Library of the House.

Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff hours have been spent shredding documents in each month since January. [202098]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202263]

Phil Hope: Information on the travel and accommodation for special advisers who accompanied my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on overseas visits are included in the list of Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers 2003–04, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House. In addition between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 a special adviser attended an official meeting in Spain. No costs were incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Information on domestic visits could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the ministerial code and the civil service management code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203446]

Phil Hope: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203507]

Phil Hope: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the code of conduct for special advisers.

Supporting People Initiative

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff are employed by the Supporting People initiative in *(a)* Worcestershire and *(b)* England. [203763]

Keith Hill: The Supporting People team in Worcestershire consists of 12 members of staff (11 full-time and one part-time). In England there are 1,176 full-time staff and 238 part-time staff working on the Supporting People programme across the 150 administrating authorities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Energy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many reactors owned by British Energy are out of action; what discussions she has had with British Energy on the potential impact on generating capacity; and if she will make a statement. [203761]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The operational performance of British Energy's nuclear power stations is a matter for the company. British Energy publishes monthly output statements which include, among other things, information on which of its power stations was unavailable in that month. My officials have regular discussions with British Energy and other generators about a range of matters affecting the generating industry. The Government's concern is to seek to ensure sufficient generating capacity to meet the countries needs. Overall generating capacity for Great Britain is projected to be 21.7 per cent. above expected peak demand for this winter. In their Winter Outlook, published on 15 October, National Grid Transco stated that the then plant margin of 20.2 per cent.

"will be sufficient to meet demands expected under average cold spell conditions."

Corporate Social Responsibility Reports

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make it her policy for companies to be required to produce annual corporate social responsibility reports in a consistent and comparable format. [203565]

Ms Hewitt: No. The Government encourage companies to report on their corporate social responsibility impacts and 145 of the FTSE 250 now report on aspects of their environmental and/or social performance. It is for companies themselves to decide the format and content of such reports which are relevant to their business.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the letter to her from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to the Managing Director of Warm Front. [204726]

Ms Hewitt: I responded to my right hon. Friend on 7 December explaining that his letter had been transferred to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for response as the issues raised fell within their responsibility.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) her Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which she has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [202373]

Ms Hewitt: The Department's HQ estate and agencies have had no empty properties for financial years 2003–04 and 2004–05.

The information for DTI's non-departmental public bodies is not held centrally.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in the last two years. [202375]

Ms Hewitt: In 2003 the cost of undertaking internal changes and refurbishment to the ministerial offices, private offices and conference space was £65,958. There have been no works undertaken in 2004.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed, as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203313]

Ms Hewitt: The Department of Trade and Industry policy on records destruction and retention will not change as a result of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203315]

Ms Hewitt: There have been no changes to the criteria for selecting Departmental files for retention or destruction in the last five years.

Departmental Five Year Programme

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was of printing her Department's Five Year Programme published on 17 November. [200949]

Ms Hewitt: The printing cost for the DTI Five Year Programme was £6,715.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether Article III-6 of the proposed EU Constitution will create a legal basis for the application of EU regulation to services of general interest. [203148]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* Article III-122 (formerly Article III-6) of the proposed Constitutional Treaty would only apply to services of general economic interest; it does not apply to non-economic services.

Exeter University

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues in the Treasury about the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202636]

(2) when the governing body of the university of Exeter informed her Department about the proposed closure of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202898]

(3) when her Department was informed about the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202896]

(4) what representations she has had from *(a)* the Royal Society of Chemistry, *(b)* the South West Regional Development Agency, *(c)* companies operating in the South West and *(d)* others concerning the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter university; and if she will make a statement; [202630]

(5) what discussions she has had with the Higher Education Funding Council about the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter university; [202635]

(6) if she will make a statement on the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision. [202638]

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision on the Government's 10-year Investment Framework for Science and Innovation; [202640]

(2) if she will make a statement on the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision; [202639]

(3) what discussions she has had with the Higher Education Funding Council about the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter university; [202642]

(4) what representations she has had from *(a)* the Royal Society of Chemistry, *(b)* the South West Regional Development Agency, *(c)* companies operating in the south west and *(d)* others concerning the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter university; and if she will make a statement; [202643]

(5) what action she proposes to take to prevent the closure of further undergraduate chemistry provision in universities; [202692]

(6) whether her Department has received reports of other university chemistry departments experiencing financial difficulty; [202693]

(7) if she will hold discussions with her ministerial colleagues in the Department for Education and Skills to seek to prevent the proposed closure by Exeter university of its undergraduate chemistry provision. [202696]

Ms Hewitt: Officials in the Department were informed of the proposed closure of Exeter's undergraduate chemistry provision in early November by officials at the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). DfES was advised informally by the Vice-Chancellor of the proposed closure in early November, prior to the formal announcement on 22 November.

My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science and Innovation, has discussed this issue with both the Higher Education Minister at the Department for Education and Skills and the Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Both my noble Friend and I have received representations from the Royal Society of Chemistry. Lord Sainsbury met with the Royal Society of Chemistry on 8 December. A small number of letters from other HE institutions, students, staff, and individuals have also been received. There have been no representations from either business or the South West Regional Development Agency.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations and as such are responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. The decision to close undergraduate chemistry provision is therefore a matter for Exeter university alone. I understand that Exeter university is working very closely with students to ensure that all their individual needs are met. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will continue to monitor the situation closely.

The Department has not received any reports of other university chemistry departments that may be experiencing financial difficulty.

The quality of chemistry research in English universities has increased significantly. 50 per cent. of departments were rated 5 or 5* in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) compared with only 20 per cent. in 1996. However, recognising concerns about future capacity to teach certain key disciplines, on 1 December the Secretary of State for the Department for Education and Skills wrote to HEFCE requesting advice on higher education subjects or courses of national strategic importance, including chemistry, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them. HEFCE will be entering into a strategic dialogue with universities, colleges, employers and other partners to consider this matter.

Science and innovation is one of my Department's key priorities: we will therefore continue to work closely with DfES, the Funding Councils and others to provide a robust, world-class research base, and delivering the Government's vision for science and innovation set out in the Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004–2014.

Our Departments and the Higher Education Funding Council for England will continue to work closely together on this issue.

External Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total cost to her Department was of the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202386]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 18 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 892W.

LNG Plant (Nigeria)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information the Export Credits Guarantee Department has sought from MW Kellogg and Kellogg, Brown and Root with regard to the bribery allegations and investigations taking place in connection with the LNG plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria. [202930]

Mr. Alexander: Given ECGD has no investigatory powers, however ECGD has sought to obtain clarification from the companies on the role and appointment of the TSKJ consortium's agent, the payment of commissions, and to what extent the companies had been in contact with the French and US investigations.

Before underwriting the loan, ECGD obtained written warranties from MW Kellogg and Bonny Project Management Company that they had not and would not engage in any corrupt activity in connection with their contracts.

Postgraduate Study

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which research councils allow students from other EU countries to accept studentships for postgraduate study in British universities. [203635]

Ms Hewitt: All those research councils which award studentships for postgraduate study allow students from other EU countries to accept studentships. Eligibility rules do not, however, allow a maintenance award in relation to such studentships to be paid unless the student has a relevant connection to the UK.

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed by the *(a)* Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, *(b)* Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils, *(c)* Economic and Social Research Council, *(d)* Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, *(e)* National Research Development Corporation, *(f)* Natural Environment Research Council and *(g)* Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of each body. [203746]

Ms Hewitt: The number of people employed by the Research Councils and their administration costs for FY2003–04 are:

	Number employed	*Administration costs 2003–04 (£ million)*
BBSRC	3,171	8.0
CCLRC	1,822	8.6
ESRC	1,06	4.7
EPSRC	304	19.9
MRC	3,542	14.5
NERC	2,599	3.9
PPARC	286	9.1

Research Councils are currently developing a common definition of administration costs and therefore the figures stated are provisional on this work being completed.

The National Research Development Corporation ceased functioning several years ago.

The Government have, in successive Spending Review settlements, affirmed the importance it attaches to science, and to the role of the Research Councils. The Government issued in July 2004 its Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004–14, a copy of which is in the Library of the House, and which affirms the Government's commitment to increasing science spending over the longer term.

Rogue Traders

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she will take to ensure that the activities of legitimate companies are not damaged by Government proposals to ban doorstep selling as a means of dealing with rogue traders. [203840]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The recent public consultation has sought views from stakeholders on a series of possible options to improve consumer protection. The consultation did not put forward the option of an outright ban on doorstep selling but invited views on a ban on cold calling to offer property services, 'with

possible necessary exceptions'. The purpose of exceptions would be to avoid constraining legitimate traders.

Shareholder Executive

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list directors of the Shareholder Executive, broken down by *(a)* appointing Department and *(b)* date of appointment; and what other (i) corporate and (ii) governmental positions each holds. [203602]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 28 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1150W.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202251]

Ms Hewitt: Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, special advisers in the Department of Trade and Industry have travelled abroad on six occasions, at an average cost of £3,012 per trip, visiting Honduras and Cancun, Iraq, and Brussels on official business.

Information relating to domestic travel undertaken by special advisers in the same period is not held centrally and cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203458]

Ms Hewitt: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203476]

Ms Hewitt: There were no complaints made by DTI civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203495]

Ms Hewitt: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in line with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iran

15. **David Cairns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Iran regarding Hamas and Hezbollah. [204246]

Mr. Straw: Yesterday, together with my French and German colleagues and Javier Solana, we met Dr. Hassan Rouhani, Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, as the first step towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement on nuclear issues. At a separate bilateral meeting I raised with Dr. Rouhani our concern about support for Hamas and Hizboullah.

We are seriously concerned at the material and political support which groups undermining peace in the Middle East through violence draw from inside Iran. The EU has made clear that its relations with Iran can move forward only if Iran takes action to address the EU's political concerns, including Iran's approach to the Middle East Peace Process and terrorism.

France

16. **Joyce Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on UK bilateral diplomatic relations with France. [204247]

Mr. MacShane: Last month's UK-French Summit highlighted the strength of our bilateral relationship. It followed a year of celebrations marking the Entente Cordiale centenary. We agreed to continue working together, to deliver shared priorities on Africa and Climate Change, during the UK's G8 and EU Presidencies next year.

Palestine

17. **Mr. MacDougall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the measures the new leadership of the Palestinian Authority is taking to prevent terror attacks being launched against Israel. [204248]

Mr. Straw: The new leadership of the Palestinian Authority has said that it will pursue security reform as a priority. We have long called for this. The UK is working with the Palestinian Authority to improve its operational capacity to provide better security for Palestinians and to prevent attacks on Israel.

Sudan

18. **Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in Darfur. [204249]

Mr. Mullin: The situation in Darfur continues to be of grave concern, with the security and consequently the humanitarian situation deteriorating. We continue to press the parties to implement the Humanitarian and Security Protocols signed at Abuja on 9 November. The UK is a key supporter of the expanding Africa Union monitoring mission and we are the second largest

bilateral donor to Darfur, having committed over £62 million in humanitarian assistance since September 2003.

Terrorism

19. **Richard Younger-Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the level of threat to UK embassies posed by terrorist cells abroad. [204250]

Mr. Rammell: The level of terrorist threat to UK missions overseas is high. We take the security of our staff extremely seriously. Security arrangements for all our Posts are regularly reviewed.

Following the attack on the US Consulate General, the FCO Overseas Security Adviser visited Saudi Arabia last week to review the security arrangements of our Posts and to offer his advice to the Ambassador and his staff.

Bangladesh

20. **Ms Buck:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the security situation in Bangladesh. [204251]

Mr. Alexander: We are concerned about the deteriorating security situation, including as a result of recent politically motivated violence, in Bangladesh. We have raised our concerns both with the Bangladeshi government, and with leaders of the opposition. The general law and order situation does not appear to be improving, and the lack of clear progress of investigations into high profile attacks on political leaders is also unsatisfactory. I intend to raise our concerns when I visit Bangladesh next week.

South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative. [204252]

Mr. MacShane: I believe the South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative (SCPI) has been a successful confidence-building project, bringing together parliamentarians from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. A number of productive meetings and conferences have been held, including the first meeting of these three countries' parliamentarians at a Plenary Assembly in Scotland in 2003. SCPI offers a positive example of a regional initiative that could be useful to build on as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy process.

Middle East

24. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to achieve greater stability in the middle east. [204255]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, with President Bush, set out a number of steps to help inject new momentum into the middle east peace process. These steps should lead through Palestinian presidential elections, and Israel's disengagement plan, to negotiations on a final settlement in the context of the Roadmap. We are taking these forward urgently, including through my recent visit, support to Palestinian elections and planning for Israeli disengagement.

25. **Mr. Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the middle east peace process. [204256]

Mr. Rammell: We have an opportunity to make progress on the middle east peace process. Several factors contribute to this: Israel's disengagement plan, elections in the Palestinian authority, and President Bush's commitment to use America's political capital to achieve progress. The middle east peace process is one of our highest foreign policy priorities. We will work with the parties and our international partners to seize this opportunity for progress.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the route change to the Israeli Security Wall recently approved by the Israeli Defence Minister. [202938]

Mr. Rammell: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear to the Israeli Foreign Minister, Silvan Shalom, on his recent visit to Israel, we consider unlawful the construction of the barrier on occupied land, with the destruction of property and hardship that it entails. We regard as positive any change that brings the barrier closer to the Green Line and which reduces its impact on Palestinian civilians.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made of the effect that the re-routing of the Security Wall in the West Bank will have on Israeli's security. [202940]

Mr. Rammell: We have not made any assessment of the effect that the re-routing of the barrier in the West Bank will have on Israel's security. This is for the Israeli authorities to do.

Afghanistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Department's strategy is for reducing the supply of opium from Afghanistan. [203741]

Mr. Rammell: The UK, as lead nation, is committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy. I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I made on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 17–18WS on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics.

We are working with the Afghan Government and others to increase activity in all areas of that strategy over the coming year. As well as co-ordinating the activity of international partners, we are providing substantial financial and practical support—spending more than £100 million over three years.

In addition, the UK works closely with Afghanistan's neighbours, including providing assistance, to help their efforts to counter the flow of opiates from Afghanistan.

Burma

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations have been made by the Government to the Government of Burma to release *(a)* all political prisoners in Burma and *(b)* Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest; and if he will make a statement. [202529]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has repeatedly pressed for the release of all political prisoners in Burma and the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, most recently when I met the Burmese Ambassador on 29 November. Aung San Suu Kyi's continued detention is completely unjustified and unacceptable both to the people of Burma and the international community. All political prisoners in Burma should be released immediately so that they can play their part in promoting national reconciliation.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the reports that the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi has been extended by the newly appointed Prime Minister of Burma, General Soe Win. [202800]

Mr. Alexander: I am deeply concerned that the Burmese military Government appears to have formally extended Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest for another year. Her continued detention is completely unjustified and unacceptable. Aung San Suu Kyi has a key role to play in national reconciliation in Burma and I have urged her immediate release.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Burma to ask for the release of the campaigner, Win Tin. [202801]

Mr. Alexander: I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November and called for the release of all political prisoners in Burma. I also called for the release of all political prisoners in my press statement of 30 November. A copy of the statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about the Government of Burma's decision to release more than 9,000 prisoners; and what assessment he has made of reports of the numbers of those released that were political detainees. [202816]

Mr. Alexander: None.

It is disappointing that only about 45 political prisoners were included in the release of more than 9,000 prisoners. This is not enough. Over 1300 political prisoners remain in Burmese jails. The Government have repeatedly urged the release of all political prisoners in the country.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about the need to *(a)* respect human rights and *(b)* uphold their obligations under the (i) Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and (ii) Convention on the Rights of the Child. [202827]

Mr. Alexander: I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November and urged the need to respect fully human rights in Burma.

Burma is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination on all forms of discrimination against women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, compliance remains limited. The UN General Assembly and the UN Commission on Human Rights have passed successive resolutions, co-sponsored by the UK, condemning human rights violations in Burma.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reason Burmese state-owned enterprises with particular reference to Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise have not been included within the sanctions comprised by Annex II of the Council Common Position on Burma 2004/730/CFSP and Annex IV of Council Regulation (EC) 798/2004. [202850]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1546W.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with representatives of the Association of South East Asian Nations regarding the role that organisation should play in the improvement of ethnic equality in Burma. [202859]

Mr. Alexander: I met ambassadors from the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN) on 29 November and urged the need for political reform in Burma, full respect for human rights and the need for all groups in Burma, including ethnic nationalities, to play a full part in national reconciliation.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to press for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from prison in Burma. [202860]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has repeatedly pressed for the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, most recently when I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November. Her continued detention under house arrest is unacceptable.

The UK works closely with its EU and international partners, as well as through the UN and the International Labour Organisation, to press for political and wider reform in Burma, the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, and the release of all political prisoners.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the roadmap to democracy in Burma put forward by the Government of Thailand. [202861]

Mr. Alexander: The UK welcomes all efforts to promote reconciliation in Burma. We support the Thai Government's engagement and effort on Burma, including the Bangkok Process meeting held in December 2003.

The Burmese State Peace and Development Council roadmap to build a modern, developed democratic nation was set out in August 2003. The UK remains committed to helping Burma achieve national

reconciliation and we will respond positively to tangible progress. However, it is essential that the road map is an inclusive and transparent process, involving all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma, if it is to be credible.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Government are taking through *(a)* the European Union and *(b)* the United Nations to improve the political situation in Burma. [202864]

Mr. Alexander: The UK works closely with its EU and UN partners to promote political reform and full respect for human rights in Burma. On 11 October the EU agreed to strengthen further restrictive measures in its Common Position on Burma. The new measures include the widening of the visa ban to serving military officers of the rank Brigadier General and above, and their families, and a prohibition on EU registered companies or organisations from making loans or credits available to, and on acquiring or extending a participation in, named Burmese state owned enterprises.

This was in response to the continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the continuing restrictions on the National league for Democracy, and the failure to allow a genuine open debate in the National Convention.

The UK fully supports all efforts by the UN to promote reconciliation in Burma. We played a key role in drafting this year's UN General Assembly resolution on human rights in Burma, due to be adopted later this month.

Child Pornography

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with which countries he has had discussions to request the removal of child pornography websites; and how many such requests have been agreed. [203678]

Mr. Rammell: No such requests have been made by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Where investigation by a UK law enforcement agency identifies a child abuse image being hosted in another jurisdiction, it will seek to notify the appropriate authority in that country of its presence so that they can seek its removal and take further appropriate action. similar process is also undertaken by the Internet Watch Foundation, the UK internet hotline for reporting child abuse images. Figures for the number of instances in which such requests have been made to other jurisdictions by UK law enforcement agencies are not available.

We are working with our G8 partners on the development and implementation of a strategy, including projects, to improve the exchange of information to combat on-line child abuse. This work includes outreach to non-G8 partners.

Since 2002, in conjunction with the National Hi-Tech Crime Unit, we have provided law enforcement agencies in 14 countries with specialised software, computers and training to detect paedophiles using internet chat rooms, and to target organised criminals who produce child pornography. In March, we co-sponsored with the National Crime Squad an international conference on the subject which was attended by 81 participants from 31 countries.

Colombia

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Colombian authorities on recent releases of prisoners accused of being guerrillas; and if he will make a statement. [203739]

Mr. Rammell: The Colombian Government alerted our Ambassador in Bogota to the decision to release 23 imprisoned left-wing (FARC) guerrillas in early December. He was advised that none of the group had been convicted of major crimes. We commend the Colombian Government for this unilateral goodwill gesture. We hope that it leads in turn to the opening of negotiations on a humanitarian exchange between the Colombian Government and the FARC, and indeed that it encourages the FARC to release the hostages it is holding. We have long maintained that the only viable solution to the armed conflict that has caused huge suffering in Colombia for over 40 years is through a negotiated settlement. We are working with the Colombian Government and other partners, including the EU, UN and civil society, to achieve this aim.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203335]

Mr. Straw: It is not possible to give accurate figures for the number of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) files destroyed in each of the past five years because the FCO records destruction in terms of linear feet not individual files. The footage figures for the last five years of records kept and destroyed are as follows:

	Destroyed (ft)	*Kept (ft)*	*Percentage destroyed*
2000	877	689	56
2001	887	568	61
2002	815	615	57
2003	900	678	57
2004	884	614	59

It is not possible to calculate with any certainty from the available data the number of files destroyed. As a rough guide only, the 884 feet destroyed in 2004 are estimated to be in the region of 10,000 files. All figures relate to FCO files for 1970–1974 which have been reviewed for preservation or destruction at the 30 year-point in accordance with standard procedures.

Detention Centres (United States of America)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the legal framework for dealing with the detainees at Guantanamo Bay and other United States detention centres, with particular reference to the detention of British citizens at Guantanamo Bay. [202756]

Mr. Mullin: Legal proceedings against the British detainees designated for trial by Military Commission were suspended at our request in July 2003. They remain suspended.

We welcome the Supreme Court's June ruling that the detainees have the right to challenge the legality of their detention.

The British Government's position is that, in the absence of a fair trial consistent with international standards, the British detainees should be returned to the UK.

Embassy/Consulate Assistance

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will introduce an accreditation scheme for solicitors whose details are given to British citizens by British embassies or consulates. [201990]

Mr. Mullin: No. Consular staff are not legally qualified to make such judgements.

EU Foreign Service

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on preparations being made within *(a)* the European Commission and *(b)* the UK Civil Service for the establishment of an EU foreign service as set out in the European Constitution; how many employees he expects will be required; at what estimated cost; and what measures are being taken to encourage recruitment of UK personnel (i) via the Commission and (ii) direct from Government Departments. [204089]

Mr. MacShane: Member states meeting in the Intergovernmental Conference agreed that, as soon as the Treaty was signed, the High Representative/ Secretary General, the Commission and member states should begin preparatory work on the European External Action Service. This Service would only be established on the entry into force of the Constitutional Treaty.

With a view to the start of such preparatory work, the Government have, as have other member states and the EU institutions, been considering how best to take this work forward. Such considerations are at a very early stage, and no decisions, including on size of the proposed Action Service, staffing, costs or recruitment have been taken.

The Commission personnel for the new service are expected to be drawn from existing relevant Commission departments. But the Government are actively looking at how we can ensure a high level of UK representation in the service as member state secondees.

EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy on the establishment of a joint EU intelligence sharing and co-ordination service. [204092]

Mr. MacShane: The Government would not support the establishment of an EU intelligence sharing and co-ordination service. Any sharing of intelligence between member states is carried out bilaterally between the countries concerned and not under the auspices of the EU. The Government does, however, support the activities of the EU's Situation Centre which was set up in 2002 to produce analyses and risk assessments to help member states formulate the common foreign and security policy. The Situation Centre is not a forum for intelligence exchange or intelligence co-ordination between member states. The Situation Centre's common assessments are based on inputs from member states.

Iraq

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what sources the Government use to calculate the total number of people killed in Iraq since 20 March 2003; and what the current total is. [204243]

Mr. Straw: I refer the hon. Member to my written statement of 17 November. There are a variety of estimates available for the number of Iraqi casualties. None of these are wholly reliable or comprehensive. But most reliable figures available come from the Iraqi Ministry of Health, which has been collating information from some 180 hospitals since April 2004. the Iraqi Ministry of Health's figures show that between 5 April and 5 October 3,853 civilians were killed.

Islah

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Government of the United Arab Emirates and *(b)* the Government of Saudi Arabia on the operation of Islah in the UK. [202935]

Mr. Rammell: The United Arab Emirates and Saudi governments have raised with us their concerns over certain Islamic groups operating in the UK. We take these concerns very seriously.

Kashmir

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with representatives of the Governments of *(a)* Pakistan and *(b)* India regarding talks about Kashmir. [204253]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed Kashmir with his Indian and Pakistani counterparts during their leaders' recent visits to the UK. The Prime Minister also spoke with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. They conveyed the UK's full support for the ongoing composite dialogue between India and Pakistan and urged both countries to seek a lasting resolution to the issue of Kashmir, which takes into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Jamaica

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will undertake a study of the security implications for Jamaica of a sudden

reduction in the price paid by the European Commission for sugar from African, Caribbean and Pacific producers. [203554]

Mr. Rammell: There are no plans to implement such a study. However, we are keenly aware of the potential impact of the EU sugar regime on Jamaica and other African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. That is why we support the EU Commission's work to produce a credible and properly funded action plan to help mitigate negative consequences. To assist the Commission in this, the Department for International Development has commissioned from the Overseas Development Institute a report entitled "Forthcoming changes in EU sugar/banana markets: a menu of options for an effective EU transitional assistance package". This report should help those countries affected by reform to determine their priorities for a transitional package.

In order to address particular security concerns in the region, I visited Jamaica in October to adopt the UK/Caribbean Regional Security Cooperation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to assist Jamaica and other countries in the region, to implement reforms to their security sectors in order to be better able to respond to the growing challenges posed by increased criminality and drug trafficking.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place with the Jamaican Government on the security implications for Jamaica of a sudden reduction in the price paid by the European Union for sugar from African, Caribbean and Pacific producers. [203562]

Mr. Rammell: In recognition of the impact that reform of the EU sugar regime will have on African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) sugar producers, the European Commission has undertaken to initiate dialogue with the affected ACP countries, including Jamaica, on the basis of an action plan. This will be used to define appropriate accompanying measures. These are to include financial assistance and help with diversification where restructuring and improvements in competitiveness in the sugar sector are not sustainable.

The UK and Jamaica have discussed the impact of EU sugar reform on Jamaica, including the security implications, at a high level. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Gareth Thomas) and I have visited Jamaica in the past two months and discussed sugar reform. In addition, two Jamaican Ministers and the chair of Jamaica's Sugar Industries Board raised concerns about the implications of EU sugar reform during discussions at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development in November 2004.

Nigeria

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of whether the previous Nigerian regime's use of financial instruments in the City of London was in accordance with international money-laundering conventions. [203766]

Mr. Rammell: Investment in the City of London by the previous Nigerian regime was the subject of a report published by the Financial Services Authority in 2001. The report followed a three-month investigation, which established that 23 banks had accounts linked to either General Abacha, his family members or close associates. Of these, 15 banks were found to have significant control weaknesses. Eight of the banks had corrected these weaknesses after the accounts were opened and seven were ordered to take action to rectify control weaknesses.

Earlier this year, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office contributed to the provision of technical assistance to the financial authorities in Nigeria in the areas of anti-money laundering and related financial crime. We have also recently agreed to participate in a large assistance programme to strengthen the Nigerian Government's anti-corruption capacity.

Pakistan

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Pakistan concerning the deaths in police custody of *(a)* Nasir Masih and *(b)* Samuel Masih. [203219]

Mr. Alexander: The British Government takes a serious view of all violent incidents involving persecution and of all other forms of religious intolerance and discrimination in Pakistan.

We believe that collective action through the European Union (EU) is the most effective way of tackling these issues. The last EU demarche to the Pakistani Government which expressed our concerns on Human Rights was in May this year. The case of Samuel Masih specifically was raised in this demarche.

More recently our High Commission in Islamabad has contacted the Public Safety Commission where the incident involving Nasir Masih took place. An inquiry is taking place into this case and local officials have undertaken to keep our High Commission informed of developments and to ensure that, subject to inquiry findings, appropriate action is taken against the police involved.

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Pakistan concerning rapes and assaults committed upon minority women and girls in Pakistan, with particular reference to the Christian girls named Neha and Sharee Komal assaulted in April and May respectively. [203220]

Mr. Alexander: Although we have not so far made specific representations to the Pakistani Government on the deeply concerning cases of Neha and Sharee Komal, the Pakistani authorities are aware that we closely monitor all cases of violent incidents which involve the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in Pakistan.

We have raised our concerns on these issues with the Pakistani authorities, along with EU colleagues, on a number of occasions, most recently in May this year.

Rockall Continental Shelf

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in resolving the Rockall continental shelf dispute with Denmark and Iceland. [204472]

Mr. MacShane: We continue to try and reach agreement with Iceland, Ireland, and Denmark (who represent the Faroes) about a division of the continental shelf in the Northeast Atlantic in the area known as the Hatton-Rockall Plateau. The most recent technical and legal exchange of information between the four states took place in November in London. A follow up meeting is scheduled to take place in the Faroe Islands in May 2005.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203503]

Mr. Straw: No, if by "speeches" the hon. Member means ones given in a public forum. Advisers in my Department make plenty of oral contributions in meetings, including ones organised by external bodies and abroad.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997. [203912]

Mr. Straw: No.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are making to encourage the peace process in Sri Lanka; and if he will make a statement. [202530]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Mr. Dismore) on 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1339W.

Thailand

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has held with the Government of Thailand on improving the human rights record of the Government of Burma before it hosts the 2006 ASEAN Summit. [202799]

Mr. Alexander: I met the Thai Ambassador on 29 November with his colleagues from other ASEAN countries, and urged the need for human rights progress in Burma before 2006. Our Ambassador to Thailand called on the Thai Foreign Minister on 11 November and discussed the need for urgent reform in Burma.

Travel Advice

Chris Bryant: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice the Foreign and Commonwealth Office gives to British travellers abroad on health care and travel insurance. [204254]

Mr. Mullin: Through its website, the FCO encourages all British nationals to ensure that they have adequate travel insurance and have taken the appropriate medical precautions. In addition, the FCO's travel advice notices provide specific health information for 217 countries or territories and link directly to the Department of Health website. Health and travel insurance issues are also included in the 'Know Before You Go' campaign consular awareness literature. Our network of 185 campaign partners help distribute this information to the public.

Turkey

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to Turkey to abolish the use of passports for internal travel on the island of Cyprus. [204009]

Mr. MacShane: EU citizens can travel from south to north Cyprus on presentation of their ID cards. EU citizens without ID cards, and Third Country nationals, must present a passport.

Since the partial lifting of restrictions on crossing the Green Line by the Turkish Cypriot authorities in 2003, thousands of Greek and Turkish Cypriots have been crossing the line every day. The Green Line Regulation, adopted by the European Council in April this year, has led to freedom of movement throughout the island for EU citizens. The Government welcomes these developments and continues to urge both sides to take further steps towards normalisation.

HEALTH

Care Guidelines

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines he had issued on the respective responsibilities of the national health service and local authority social service departments for the care of people *(a)* resident in a care home and *(b)* in their own home, who suffer from a chronic condition. [202134]

Dr. Ladyman: In September 2001, the Department issued guidance, [HSC 2001/17:LAC(2001)26] outlining the arrangements for the introduction of national health service-funded nursing care for all care home residents from 1 October 2001. This transferred the responsibility to the NHS for funding the nursing care of those care home residents paying the full costs of their care from a registered nurse and ensured parity with others who were already receiving NHS-funded nursing care in their own homes or in residential accommodation through NHS community nursing services.

Further guidance, issued in March 2003—HSC 2003/006: LAC(2003)7—outlined the arrangements for implementing NHS funded nursing care for all care home residents from 1 April 2003.

Through domiciliary care services, local authorities provide personal care and support to adults and older people in their own homes.

In 2002 and 2003, the Department issued guidance on fair access to care services. This guidance provides councils with a framework for setting their eligibility criteria for adult social care.

The personal care needs of residents of care homes and those living at home are the responsibility of the individual or the local council.

Services are provided based on an assessment of need and local authorities have a discretionary power to charge for these services. The Department issued guidance—"Fairer Charging for Home Care and other non-residential Social Services"—to all local councils in November 2001, which seeks to ensure that, where councils do charge, this will be based on fairer, well designed charging policies.

Complementary Medicine

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will list the complementary *(a)* treatments and *(b)* therapies which are available to patients on the NHS. [204331]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government expects decisions on local services to be made by frontline service providers and this also applies to complementary therapies. In making such decisions, national health service organisations take into account evidence for the safety and effectiveness of the treatment, and the availability of properly qualified and regulated practitioners.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost to train a dentist *(a)* in total and *(b)* per year. [200594]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Costs vary across the nine dental schools in England. At current prices, the average, including both the cost of academic and clinical training, for which the Higher Education Council for England and the Department are responsible respectively, is £160,000 or £32,000 per year over the five-year course.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the annual cost to the NHS on average of one NHS dentist under the new dentistry contract. [200595]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All dentists providing general dental services immediately before 1 October 2005, including associates, will have a right to be offered a contract with the primary care trust when the new arrangements come into effect. Dentists will be offered gross earnings (turnover) protection lasting three years based on their most recent gross earnings uplifted by any agreed doctors' and dentists' review body increase provided they maintain the same level of national health service commitment. It is premature to forecast how many dentists will opt for protection but, by way of illustration, we estimate that in 2003–04 the cost of a general dental practitioner dentist with a significant commitment to the NHS was £108,700 net of patient charge income.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists in Lancashire have received grants to establish and equip their practice in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [203040]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [200780]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has led on the implementation of four directives in the last two years, counted since 9 December 2002. The Food Standards Agency (FSA), which deals with issues of food safety, has led with the implementation of 31 directives. The number of regulations which FSA is responsible for, and have direct effect in UK law, is 18. This information, together with information about commission decisions, of which there are 18, has been placed in the Library.

This Department does not hold cost information in the form requested and such information could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

The Department is required to produce regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) for proposals, including those originating in European legislation, likely to impose costs on business, charities or voluntary organisations. Copies of these are available in the Library and on the Department's website.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* PFI projects in his Department for each of the last two years. [200794]

Mr. Hutton: The capital value of national health service projects completed during 2003 and 2004 (as at 9 December 2004) is as shown in the table.

£ million

	2003	*2004*	*Total*
Publicly funded	279	442	721
Private finance initiatives (estimated)	511	89	600
Total	790	531	1,321

Detailed information is not held centrally for schemes with a capital value below £10 million. We do not make a distinction between new build or demolition rebuild.

Diabetes

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many clinically-led diabetes networks have been established; and whether existing networks have been established at a level coterminous with secondary healthcare. [203618]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Evidence available from strategic health authority diabetes leads suggests that there are currently 156 diabetes networks in England that are coterminous with specialist teams, the latter of whom are mostly based in secondary care.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the status of the National Diabetes Support Team will be after the abolition of the NHS Modernisation Agency. [203625]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national diabetes support team has been established to provide assistance to national health service trusts in England to implement the national service framework for diabetes through promoting partnership working and the spreading of best practice. It has been funded up to March 2007. The national diabetes support team will not be affected by changes made to the Modernisation Agency.

Draft Mental Health Bill

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what basis he has calculated that the draft Mental Health Bill will not lead to any net increase in compulsory admissions. [203186]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following factors were considered when calculating the effects of the Mental Health Bill on the numbers under compulsion:

service changes: changes in the provision and quality of services may affect the number of people whose condition is treated early enough so that they do not become so ill as to warrant the use of the Act,

the introduction of compulsion in the community,

the Bill's clearer tighter definition of protection of the patients from self-harm,

the impact of the removal of the exclusions and treatability criterion,

the new provisions relating to children in the Bill.

As a result of consideration of these different factors, some of which could lead to reductions and some to increases in the number of people under compulsion, we reached the conclusion that the Bill would not lead to any significant change in the number of people liable to treatment under formal powers.

Food Labelling

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in relation to extending the lists of nutrients and nutrient sources permitted for use under the provisions of the Food Supplements Directive and the Food Supplements (England) Regulation. [201985]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Food Manufacturers Association and Food Standards Agency officials have met with officials from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Commission to discuss the implications of the Food Supplements Directive (FSD). It was made clear at those meetings that, before further ingredients may be added to the lists in the FSD, they must be assessed for safety through submission of a dossier and have received a positive opinion from the EFSA.

The United Kingdom Government have nevertheless made clear that, providing an ingredient was on the market before July 2002 and a dossier has been submitted to a member state, that ingredient can remain on sale in the UK pending an opinion by EFSA following its safety evaluation.

Group B Streptococcus

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment of the protocols put in place for dealing with Group B Streptococcus in pregnant women in *(a)* Belgium and *(b)* the United States. [201014]

Dr. Ladyman: Protocols are in place for dealing with Group B Streptococcus (GBS) in pregnant women.

Testing for carriage of GBS, although not obligatory, is almost always performed in Belgium. A doctor who did not screen a pregnant woman for this problem would be badly viewed by his or her colleagues.

There are no uniform federal protocols in the United States of America for screening pregnant women for Group B Streptococcus. However, there are numerous guidelines on awareness.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines recommend universal screening of pregnant women for GBS during the 35 to 37 weeks of pregnancy. This, however, is a recommendation only, and although the CDC makes every effort to bring these good routines to the attention of the States, there is no federal mandate that enforces compliance.

A number of state officials have each confirmed that these issues are not regulated, but every effort is made to ensure that state healthcare providers are aware of these CDC recommendations.

It has been estimated from studies in the USA that the current policy of antenatal screening and intravenous antibiotics during labour has reduced the number of cases of early onset GBS to rates comparable to those in the United Kingdom in the absence of screening, despite a similar rate of maternal carriage of the organism. Routine antenatal screening for GBS is not recommended in the UK at present because evidence of its effectiveness remains uncertain. The emphasis is on reducing the rates of infection through improved management of women most at risk and the UK National Screening Committee is currently taking forward a programme of work with this aim.

Furthermore screening and the use of prophylactic antibodies carries significant risks of its own, including maternal death due to adverse reaction and increased antibiotic resistance.

Given that the UK rate of infection without screening is of a comparable order to the US rate, with screening, introduction of screening cannot be justified in the UK until we have evidence that it would further reduce the UK rate of infection and also do more good than harm.

Health Funding

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what estimate he has made of public funding for health

per capita in *(a)* the West Midlands, *(b)* Birmingham and *(c)* Hodge Hill in each of the next three financial years. [204185]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the 2005–6 revenue funding per un-weighted head of population for primary care trusts (PCTs) in the West Midlands, which also covers Birmingham and Hodge Hill.

The 2006–07 and 2007–08 revenue allocations have not yet been determined. Work has commenced on the next round of revenue allocations, covering the period 2006–07 to 2007–08. The next round of allocations will be announced early in the new year.

West Midlands 2005–06 PCT allocations per un-weighted head of population

PCT	*Allocation per un-weighted head of population*
Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth	943
Cannock Chase	980
Coventry Teaching	1,102
Dudley Beacon and Castle	1,105
Dudley South	1,008
East Staffordshire	966
Eastern Birmingham	1,237
Heart of Birmingham Teaching	1,233
Herefordshire	974
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1,080
North Birmingham	1,075
North Stoke	1,219
North Warwickshire	1,012
Oldbury and Smethwick	1,212
Redditch and Bromsgrove	936
Rowley, Regis and Tipton	1,191
Rugby	1,047
Shropshire County	985
Solihull	1,003
South Birmingham	1,179
South Stoke	1,142
South Warwickshire	953
South Western Staffordshire	933
South Worcestershire	951
Staffordshire Moorlands	1,053
Telford and Wrekin	966
Walsall Teaching	1,147
Wednesbury and West Bromwich	1,199
Wolverhampton City	1,164
Wyre Forest	982

Identity Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the likely effects on health tourism of the introduction of identity cards; [203522]

(2) whether he expects the NHS to make savings following the introduction of identity cards. [203523]

Mr. Hutton: The Department is currently investigating the benefits that identity cards would bring for the national health service and for patients. We anticipate that ID cards will make the existing eligibility checks easier for staff and more robust. We therefore expect extra income from charging chargeable patients, reduced inappropriate use of free NHS services and efficiency gains from quicker processing of patients. This will also bring benefits to patients, as they will be able to demonstrate their eligibility speedily through showing their identity card. An additional benefit would come from identifying patients who might be unconscious and confused. Our preliminary view is therefore that identity cards will deliver significant benefits to the NHS.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the identity card will replace the proposed European health card due to be introduced by 31 December 2005. [203637]

Mr. Hutton: No. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which replaces the E111, serves an entirely different function from the ID card. The EHIC is used when travelling in other European Economic Area member states to access free or reduced cost healthcare, the need for which becomes medically necessary during the trip, on the same basis as residents of that country. The EHIC will be voluntary and people who do not travel outside the United Kingdom will not need one. The ID card will have a range of domestic uses.

Long-Term Care (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many older people are in receipt of long-term care within the Greater London area. [204094]

Dr. Ladyman: Information about the number of places in residential care is collected, but information about the number of people in those places is not centrally available.

In March 2001, there were 30,800 care home places in London for adults aged 65 and over. This includes places in residential care homes, general and mental nursing homes, private hospitals and clinics.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but comparable details are not available.

Lowe Syndrome

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many children are diagnosed each year with Lowe syndrome in England; [203271]

(2) what treatment options are available to children born with Lowe syndrome; [203273]

(3) what the life expectancy is of a child born with Lowe syndrome; [203274]

(4) what the causes are of Lowe syndrome; [203275]

(5) what research he has commissioned into Lowe syndrome. [203276]

Dr. Ladyman: Data on children diagnosed with Lowe syndrome are not collected centrally.

There is no specific treatment available for the syndrome. Treatment is available for its consequences, including neurological and behavioural abnormalities and renal tubular dysfunction.

Life expectancy varies with the severity of the condition in individuals and the success of symptomatic treatment. Patients have lived into adulthood.

Lowe syndrome is a rare, inheritable, progressive, metabolic disease caused by a single defective gene on the X chromosome of the child's mother.

The Department has not commissioned research into Lowe syndrome. The main agency through which the government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC), which always welcomes high quality applications for research into any aspect of human health. These are judged in open competition with other demands for funding. Awards are made according to their scientific quality and importance to human health. Further details are available on the MRC website at www.mrc.ac.uk.

Mental Health

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what working arrangements Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust has in place with other mental health trusts; [204040]

(2) whether plans have been made by Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust to merge with Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust; and if he will make a statement; [204041]

(3) what discussions have taken place about joint working between representatives of Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust and Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust. [204042]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: Within our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", supported by other national policy documents, primary care trusts, in conjunction with their strategic health authorities and other stakeholders, are responsible for assessing local health needs, and planning services accordingly.

I am informed by the local national health service that there are currently no plans to merge Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire mental health trusts. The two organisations continue to operate as separate bodies with their own boards and chairs. Federal management arrangements are now in place with a joint chief executive and a number of shared directorial roles, including the director of finance. These roles will enable a good degree of cross-organisational working and ensure that the experience of the Oxfordshire trust team is employed to improve the performance and services of Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust.

Thames Valley SHA is about to commence work with the chief executives of the mental health trusts across Thames Valley to examine in more detail the ways in which they can work together to ensure critical mass for some specialist and forensic services, and to discuss future direction for services, but for the moment no organisational change is planned.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, (1) what assessment *(a)* the Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust and *(b)* Wycombe Primary Care Trust have made of (i) the demand and (ii) the need for services by people with mental health problems in Wycombe constituency; [204043]

(2) what assessment the *(a)* Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust and *(b)* Wycombe Primary Care Trust have made of (i) the demand and (ii) the need for respite care by (A) service users and (B) carers in Wycombe constituency. [204044]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: Within our policy of Shifting the Balance of Power, supported by other national policy documents, primary care trusts, in conjunction with their strategic health authorities and other stakeholders, are responsible for assessing local health needs, and planning services accordingly.

I am informed by the local national health service that Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust has, like all other mental health provider organisation in the NHS, been working extremely hard on the modernisation agenda in the NHS as laid out in the NHS plan and the national service framework for mental health services for adults of working age.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of specific provision for children and young people from black and ethnic minorities with mental health problems. [203607]

Dr. Ladyman: "Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care", which will be published very shortly, includes an assessment of the needs of children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities with mental health problems, and actions to address them. This work will be carried out by the National Institute for Mental Health in England and the national child adolescent mental health service support service.

National Director for Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what priorities he has set for the National Director for Mental Health, with particular reference to the implementation of patient choice. [203217]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No specific priorities in relation to patient choice have been set for the national director for mental health. However, he has been involved in overseeing the work of the choice steering group, which has been established under the auspices of the National Institute for Mental Health in England, to inform the development of choice policy in mental health.

NHS Expenditure

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what NHS expenditure *(a)* in total and *(b)* per person on (i) children aged under five, (ii) children aged five to 18, (iii) men aged 18 to 60, (iv) women aged 18 to 60, (v) women aged over 60 and (vi) men aged over 60 years, or on whatever other basis of gender and age is available, was in the last year for which figures are available. [203165]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the split of total national health service expenditure by age and gender is not available. The table shows total hospital and community health services (HCHS) expenditure, split by age band, for 2002–03.

2002–03 HCHS expenditure by age band

	HCHS expenditure (£ million)	*HCHS expenditure per person (£)*
All births	1,433	2,570
Age 0–4	2,146	930
Age 5–15	1,472	211
Age 16–44	7,085	354
Age 45–64	6,545	553
Age 65–74	5,767	1,397
Age 75–84	6,683	2,387
Age 85+	3,956	4,147
Total	35,087	708

NHS Professionals

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many placements have been secured through NHS Professionals to date, broken down by *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* allied professionals. [203125]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not held centrally. Since NHS Professionals was established as a Special Health Authority in April 2004, it has secured a total of 935,826 placements, made up of 4,347 doctors, 890,374 nurses and 1,754 allied health professionals. The remainder were administrative and clerical staff.

NHS Staff (Pharmaceutical Company Funding)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on hospitals employing nurses and doctors funded wholly or in part by pharmaceutical companies. [203205]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's, "Commercial Sponsorship(Ethical Standards for the NHS", a copy of which is available in the Library, clearly defines the steps to be taken by all national health service bodies and staff involved in any collaborative partnership with outside industry. NHS employers have to satisfy themselves that sponsorship arrangements are properly conducted and are in the best interests of the NHS. They must ensure that monitoring arrangements are established so that all sponsorship deals are documented and audited. Where collaborative partnerships involve a pharmaceutical company then the proposed arrangements must comply fully with the Medicines (Advertising) Regulations 1994 (regulation 21 'inducements and hospitality').

NHS Staff Profile

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of NHS *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* other staff are from (i) other EU countries, (ii) Commonwealth countries and (iii) other countries. [202990]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Patient Education

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research is being undertaken into patient education and long-term condition self-management strategies. [203622]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The expert patients programme, funded by the Department, provides group based training on self management and self care to people with long term conditions. A randomised controlled trial is under way to evaluate its effectiveness. This is due to report in a year's time.

Primary Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the connection between the level of deprivation in an area and the quality of its primary care facilities; and if he will place in the Library the research and evidence on which this assessment is based. [203056]

Mr. Hutton: The Department is not aware of any formal research on levels of deprivation and the quality of primary care facilities. Decisions on the allocation of resources to support improvements to the primary care built environment are taken by primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of local knowledge of service need and other factors including levels of deprivation within their communities. Locally focused research may have been undertaken by some PCTs to support this function.

The targeting of the national health service local improvement finance trust implementation programme is intended to make a major contribution to investment need within deprived communities.

Rare Diseases (Funding)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding streams are available to organisations seeking to research medical treatment for rare diseases. [203272]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The main agency through which the Government support medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology. The MRC always welcomes high quality applications for support into any aspect of human health and these are judged in open competition with other demands on funding.

The Department allocates over 75 per cent. of its research and development budget to national health service organisations, some of which conduct research related into rare diseases.

The Department does not allocate funds directly to charities for research; nor does the MRC normally do so.

Regional Public Health

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated public expenditure on the *(a)* regional public health observatories and *(b)* regional public health groups was in England in the latest year for which figures are available. [203557]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In 2003–04, expenditure on the regional public health observatories was £3,334 million and expenditure on the regional public health groups was £11,929 million.

School Nurse Service

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurses have been employed in each of the last 10 years. [203188]

Mr. Hutton: Information is not available on the number of school nurses employed in the national health service in each of the last 10 years. The Government collected information on the school nursing workforce in the September 2003 non-medical workforce census but this information was incomplete. Reliable information will be available from the September 2004 workforce census and we intend to publish the data in February 2005.

Skills for Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding Skills for Health has received in each financial year since April 2002. [203615]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for Skills for Health, as it is an independent United Kingdom-wide organisation, which receives funding from all four UK health departments, as well as other bodies. The hon. Member may wish to contact Ms Chris Hannah, Chair of the Skills for Health board.

St. George's Hospital (Walk-in Centre)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been treated at the NHS walk-in centre at St. George's Hospital in each year since it was opened. [204088]

Dr. Ladyman: The Tooting national health service walk-in centre, based in the grounds of St. George's hospital, is the responsibility of the Wandsworth primary care trust. The centre officially opened in April 2000 and data on attendance are available from May 2000. These are shown in the following table.

Period	*Attendances*
May 2000 to December 2000	10,221
January 2001 to December 2001	26,220
January 2002 to December 2002	31,447
January 2003 to December 2003	39,970
January 2004 to October 2004	35,333
Total activity since opening	143,191

Tuberculosis/Hepatitis

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* the mobile screening service for tuberculosis and *(b)* all screening services for tuberculosis in the latest year for which figures are available. [200102]

Miss Melanie Johnson: National health service mobile chest radiography services for tuberculosis screening were disbanded in the early 1980s.

The Health Protection Agency does not collect data on costs associated with screening services for tuberculosis.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in *(a)* Solihull parliamentary constituency and *(b)* the Borough of Solihull have waited for more than six months for foot and ankle surgery in 2004. [203639]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: This information is not available in the format requested.

The table shows the time waited for foot and ankle surgery for patients within Solihull Primary Care Trust, which includes residents from the Solihull constituency and the Borough of Solihull, during 2003–04.

Waiting list and booked cases: count of finished in-year admission, distribution of time waited for foot and ankle surgery for Solihull PCT in national health service hospitals in England 2003–04

	Foot and ankle surgery
Time waited	
Under 3 months	72
3 to 6 months	77
6 months and over	23
Total admissions	173
Mean days	151
Median days	109

Notes:

Ungrossed data

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, i.e. that data are ungrossed.

Time waited

Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period, whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Finished in-year admissions

A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 15 December 2004

TREASURY

Accounting Officers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions since 1 June he has been informed of a Minister issuing a direction to an accounting officer as set out in paragraphs 14 to 17 of the Treasury document, The Responsibilities of an Accounting Officer; on which grounds the note of dissent was issued; and if he will make a statement. [204782]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury has not been informed of any directions issued by Ministers to Accounting Officers under this guidance since the reply given to the hon. Member by my predecessor on 8 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 810W.

Cricket

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 16W, on the International Cricket Conference Headquarters, from which International Sports Federations he has received representations on taxation issues affecting their proposed headquarter locations. [203729]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: The Government have received a representation from the UK Sports Council. The Government welcome any further representations there may be on taxation issues.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203319]

Mr. Timms: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in HM Treasury under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203320]

Mr. Timms: Records are appraised 29 years after the oldest paper on the file. In accordance with The National Archives' guidance, the Treasury has destroyed the following number of files in each of the last five years.

File year	*Destroy*
1970	1,615
1971	1,609
1972	1,962
1973	1,650
1974	[1]1,747

[1] Provisional.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204357]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 12 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 355W. Expenditure on official entertainment for 2003–04 was £116,000. Further analysis could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in "Government Accounting".

European Union

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list activities in which his Department has been involved to promote the benefits of the Government's policy towards the European Union; what the costs were; what partner organisations were involved; and if he will make a statement. [204225]

Mr. Timms: The Government work with a wide range of partners to develop and communicate their policy towards the European Union, including the CBI, Chambers of Commerce, trade unions and more, including other EU member states and EU institutions. Costs of these activities are covered from departmental budgets, as set out in annual departmental reports.

GDP (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the per capita GDP was for the Pendle local authority area in each year since 1995. [205007]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Gordon Prentice, dated 15 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about GDP per capita for Pendle local authority. (205007)

Pendle local authority is in Lancashire County Council (NUTS3 area), which is currently the lowest geographic level at which GVA per capita is published. The latest published information is for 2001.

The estimates in table A are based on the regional Gross Value Added[1] (GVA) estimates published in December 2003. These are available on the National Statistics website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk = 10904&More = n

Table A

	Gross value added (GVA)[1] *per head for Lancashire County Council (NUTS3 area) at current basic prices 1995 to 2001*
1995	9,791
1996	10,141
1997	10,527
1998	10,996
1999	11,496
2000	12,034
2001	12,534

[1] Information presented here is Gross Value Added (GVA) which is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products.

Industrial Redundancies

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many redundancies per 1,000 workers are estimated from the Labour Force Survey to have been experienced in each industrial sector since 1997. [204612]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibilities of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 15 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about redundancy.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides estimates of redundancies experienced by survey respondents in the three month period before their survey interviews.

The table overleaf shows the rates of redundancies per 1,000 employees in each industrial sector of the UK in each three month period since 1997. The data are up-dated quarterly in the "Jobleavers and redundancies" section of the ONS website.

The estimates for the LFS are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Redundancies rates—United Kingdom—not seasonally adjusted

Rates per 1,000 employees[1]

3 months ending	*Agriculture, fishing, energy and water (A-C, E)*	*Manufacturing (D)*	*Construction (F)*	*Distribution, hotels and restaurants (G, H)*
May 1997	11.0	10.8	20.5	7.5
August 1997	10.9	10.4	17.1	6.6
November 1997	6.8	8.8	16.8	5.7
February 1998	15.5	10.7	12.8	9.2
May 1998	13.3	12.1	9.3	7.1
August 1998	11.4	12.1	16.7	7.4
November 1998	11.4	14.0	15.0	5.4
February 1999	14.1	16.6	23.8	7.9
May 1999	12.1	16.3	20.2	5.8
August 1999	14.6	14.1	15.5	7.3
November 1999	10.3	10.6	13.0	6.7
February 2000	13.3	14.7	16.2	8.2
May 2000	11.9	16.2	11.5	7.5
August 2000	7.4	11.1	14.3	7.6
November 2000	8.9	11.7	11.0	7.2
February 2001	15.6	14.1	10.9	6.3
May 2001	8.6	13.2	11.9	7.2
August 2001	5.4	16.1	8.3	6.1
November 2001	7.1	16.3	10.9	5.8
February 2002	7.1	16.5	15.8	6.8
May 2002	10.1	16.9	10.0	6.1
August 2002	11.1	14.6	10.7	5.5
November 2002	15.5	11.9	10.3	6.6
February 2003	9.3	16.1	12.2	5.6
May 2003	8.1	13.7	12.7	5.9
August 2003	5.9	14.7	9.2	5.0
November 2003	5.4	11.4	11.6	6.0
February 2004	9.4	11.1	12.7	5.4
May 2004	9.7	12.1	9.4	5.0
August 2004	4.0	12.1	9.4	5.2

3 months ending	*Transport and communications (I)*	*Banking, finance and insurance (J-K)*	*Public administration, education and health (L-N)*	*Total services (G-Q)*
May 1997	9.0	6.6	2.8	5.5
August 1997	5.0	7.7	2.7	5.2
November 1997	7.8	6.0	2.1	4.5
February 1998	5.8	7.2	1.6	5.6
May 1998	9.1	7.5	1.9	5.6
August 1998	7.7	5.6	2.2	4.9
November 1998	8.1	8.4	2.4	5.0

3 months ending	*Transport and communications (I)*	*Banking, finance and insurance (J-K)*	*Public administration, education and Health (L-N)*	*Total services (G-Q)*
February 1999	7.5	8.1	1.4	5.5
May 1999	8.7	7.2	1.5	4.7
August 1999	6.1	5.3	1.7	4.5
November 1999	6.9	9.1	2.4	5.5
February 2000	6.0	8.5	1.3	5.5
May 2000	8.1	7.0	1.0	4.8
August 2000	6.8	7.5	1.2	4.7
November 2000	8.8	6.7	1.9	5.1
February 2001	7.0	6.8	1.4	4.5
May 2001	7.2	7.4	1.4	5.0
August 2001	9.5	9.5	1.3	5.2
November 2001	6.0	11.5	1.8	5.5
February 2002	13.4	10.4	1.6	6.3
May 2002	14.4	9.5	1.6	5.9
August 2002	9.3	8.7	1.9	5.1
November 2002	9.6	8.4	1.5	5.2
February 2003	8.5	10.8	1.2	5.2
May 2003	6.4	7.7	1.3	4.4
August 2003	7.8	8.5	1.4	4.4
November 2003	6.1	7.9	1.7	4.6
February 2004	6.5	7.0	0.9	4.0
May 2004	8.4	7.3	1.0	4.3
August 2004	8.0	6.8	1.5	4.1

[1] The redundancy rate is based on the ratio of the redundancy level for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter, multiplied by 1,000

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Inland Revenue and Customs

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the topics are of the group litigation orders brought against the Inland Revenue and Customs which were resolved in the last 12 months; how many litigants participated in each group; what the name was of each corporate litigant; and whether each was registered *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* in another jurisdiction. [204606]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue is dealing with six categories of company group litigation order as follows:

Franked Investment Income—13 claimant groups

Foreign Income Dividends—20 claimant groups

Thin Capitalisation—15 claimant groups

Controlled Foreign Companies—24 claimant groups

Loss Relief Group Litigation—74 claimant groups

Advance Corporation Tax—around 750 claimant groups

To the extent that litigants' names are in the public domain, they can be obtained from the High Court, where they are not in the public domain it would be inappropriate to disclose them.

Approximately 50 of the companies concerned are not resident in the UK; 24 cases were settled finally in 2004.

HM Customs and Excise have not received any group litigation orders.

Inland Revenue (Overpayments)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many requests have been made to the Inland Revenue Overpayments Dispute Team by claimants of tax credit for waiver of recovery due to *(a)* official error and *(b)* hardship; and how many such requests were accepted. [201564]

Dawn Primarolo: By the end of November about 67,000 taxpayers had returned Form TC846, or had otherwise been recorded as requesting the write-off of their overpayments on grounds of official error. In total about 1,100 families had their overpayments written off by the end of November for that reason. To date the Inland Revenue has had to consider very few requests for overpayments to be written off on ground of inability to pay.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (1) what the average time is from the receipt of a completed TC846 form, for a decision to be made by the Inland Revenue on an appeal against its decision to recover tax credit overpayments; [203283]

(2) how many completed TC846 forms have been received by the Inland Revenue requesting a reconsideration of its decision to recover tax credits for *(a)* the 2003–04 tax year and *(b)* the current tax year. [203284]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 7 December 2004]*: For the number of forms received, I refer my right hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East (Dr. Kumar) today.

Information on the average time taken to deal with these requests is not available.

International Finance Facility

Tom Brake: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will outline the positions taken by each of the G8 member countries in respect of the International Finance Facility. [204593]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Banbury (Tony Baldry) on 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 442W.

Landfill

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much landfill tax has been paid by operators on *(a)* in-house and *(b)* merchant landfill sites in each year since 1997. [203688]

John Healey: Landfill tax receipts are routinely published by HM Customs and Excise at www.uktradeinfo.com in the Landfill Tax Bulletin.

Separate data on landfill tax paid by operators on *(a)* in-house and *(b)* merchant landfill sites are not available.

MRSA

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have died of MRSA in care homes, as a proportion of total MRSA deaths, in each of the last five years. [204586]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Brian Cotter, dated 15 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people have died of MRSA in care homes, as a proportion of total MRSA deaths in each of the last five years. (204586)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2002. Figures on deaths in care homes in England and Wales for the years 1998 to 2002, where MRSA was mentioned anywhere on death certificate, are given in the table.

Deaths in care homes[1] where MRSA was a contributory factor[2], in care homes, England and Wales, 1998–2002[3]

	Number	*Percentage of all MRSA deaths*
1998	42	10.2
1999	38	7.8
2000	51	7.6
2001	53	7.2
2002	53	6.6

[1] Care homes were defined as NHS and non-NHS nursing homes, local authority residential homes and private residential homes

[2] Identified using the methodology described in Griffiths C, Lamagni TL, Crowcroft NS, Duckworth G and Rooney C (2004) Trends in MRSA in England and Wales: analysis of morbidity and mortality data for 1993–2002. Health Statistics Quarterly 21, 15–22.

[3] Figures are for deaths occurring in 1998 to 2002.

Office for National Statistics

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what account the Office for National Statistics intends to take of the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards. [204415]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 15 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what account the Office for National Statistics (ONS) intends to take of the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards. (204415)

ONS has been addressing the issue of the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) through its membership of Eurostat's Taskforce on Accounting and Statistics since 2001, and has been considering the possible effects of the introduction of IFRS on UK statistical data through business contacts since 2003.

In 2004, ONS established a taskforce, to address the statistical implications of IFRS. The objectives of this taskforce include establishing the potential incidence and significance of any statistical discontinuities arising from the introduction of IFRS. The taskforce established a three-stage action plan for addressing the issue, involving initial direct contacts with significant data contributors, a survey of a broad range of 500 data contributors (early in 2005) and subsequent amendments, as appropriate, to data collections in respect of 2005 onwards.

Despite the proximity of the introduction of IFRS for EU listed businesses, little conclusive information has yet been available about the specific impacts of IFRS on business statistics. Of those businesses contacted to date by ONS, very few have yet been willing or in a position to comment on the effects of IFRS. Very recent contacts have indicated that businesses are beginning to address the IFRS issue with some urgency and it is hoped that much more specific information will be obtained from the survey in early 2005.

In addition, ONS is planning for contingencies including any further special surveys necessary later in 2005, any changes to regular business surveys and the handling of any discontinuities in key surveys. As more specific information becomes available, ONS will keep key stakeholders informed.

ISA Savings

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the outstanding stock of *(a)* cash ISAs, *(b)* insurance ISAs and *(c)* equity ISAs was on 31 March (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003 and (iv) 2004; and what the net change in stock was for the years (A) 2002, (B) 2003 and (C) 2004. [204413]

Mr. Timms: Figures of outstanding stocks of cash, insurance and equity ISAs are available in table 9.6 of Inland Revenue Statistics published on the Inland Revenue website; http://newinternet.inrev.gov.uk/stats/isa/table9_6_september04.pdf

Staff Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204373]

Mr. Timms: Inland Revenue (incorporating the Valuation Office Agency) and HM Customs and Excise have a total of 75 gyms available to staff, of which one is a shared facility with HM Treasury.

Identifying the costs of providing the IR and C&E facilities would incur disproportionate costs. Members' subscriptions to the various civil service sports associations help to fund equipment for use in these facilities.

Management and equipment costs of the shared facility at 1 Horse Guards Road in Westminster are met from membership subscriptions.

Tax Credits

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many recipients of working tax credit have been credited for underpayments in the last 12 months and subsequently told that the underpayment recalculations were wrong. [203214]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him of 14 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 347W.

Third World Debt

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what representations he has made to *(a)* G8 and *(b)* Paris Club Nations on following the UK's lead in paying 10 per cent. of the debt service owed by highly indebted poor countries to the World Bank and African Development Bank; [204277]

(2) whether the UK will pay debt service on behalf of the world's poorest countries to the International Monetary Fund; and if he will make a statement; [204280]

(3) what representations he has made to *(a)* the International Monetary Fund, *(b)* the World Bank and *(c)* regional development banks to (i) cancel debt owed to them by the world's poorest countries and (ii) revalue gold reserves to finance cancellation. [204281]

Mr. Timms: The UK is proposing that the international community—including the G8, Paris Club and the EU—provide up to 100 per cent. relief on the debt owed by poor countries to the World Bank and African Development Bank. In order to avoid reducing aid elsewhere, or running down the resources of the international institutions, this should be funded through new commitments from all donors.

The UK is leading the way by paying its share of debt payments owed to the World Bank and African Development Bank, not just for HIPC countries but for all low income countries, as long as they can ensure debt relief is used for poverty reduction.

The UK will continue to call for the relief on debts owed to the IMF to be funded through more efficient use of IMF gold reserves.

University Donations

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his most recent estimate is of the total cost in a year to the Exchequer of tax reliefs provided on donations to universities. [204002]

John Healey *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: Universities, along with other charities that are registered with the Inland Revenue, are able to reclaim gift aid on qualifying donations. The amount the charity reclaims is equivalent to approximately 28 per cent. of the value of the donation.

It is not possible to ascertain the amount repaid in gift aid in relation to universities, because Inland Revenue records do not distinguish amounts repaid to charities according to type of charity. The available information relates to all charities and is published in Table 10.2 of Inland Revenue statistics at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/charities/menu.htm.

TRANSPORT

Blue Badge Parking Scheme

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the report from the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Team on the Blue Badge Parking Scheme; and if he will make a statement; [203668]

(2) what plans he has to reform the Blue Badge Parking Scheme to ensure that *(a)* local authorities are more circumspect in issuing Blue Badges and *(b)* there are sufficient disabled parking spaces to accommodate Blue Badge parking holders; [203669]

(3) what steps he is taking to prevent abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme; [203670]

(4) what discussions he has had with local authorities regarding *(a)* reform of and *(b)* abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme; [203671]

(5) what plans he has to ensure greater security of the Blue Badge Scheme. [203672]

Charlotte Atkins: The information requested is as follows:

Review of the Blue Badge Scheme

Careful and detailed consideration was given to the report and each of the recommendations made by the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) following the review of the scheme. We accepted the majority of their 47 recommendations.

Work is in hand to take forward the recommendations. Changes need to be made to primary and secondary legislation, further research needs to be carried out and revised guidance issued to local authorities. On the latter, we will be issuing new guidance to local authorities on all aspects of the scheme, including assessment of applications to encourage consistency in the issue of badges.

We have already secured the necessary slots for the primary legislation. We intend to consult on changes to the regulations and draft guidance by spring 2005.

Abuse

Theft of blue badges and abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme is of concern to the Department. Measures exist to tackle abuse as follows:

it an offence under Section 117 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for the badge itself to be misused by a non-disabled person; the maximum fine on conviction being £1,000;

local authorities have powers to withdraw a badge if the holder constantly misuses it or allows it to be misused by others;

it is an offence under Section 47 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to park a vehicle which is not displaying a badge in a designated disabled persons' parking bay.

We are also taking forward a number of additional enforcement measures following the review. These include an important power for the police, traffic wardens and local authority parking enforcement officers to inspect badges to check details and the photograph of the badge holder. We have already made provision for this in the Traffic Management Act 2004

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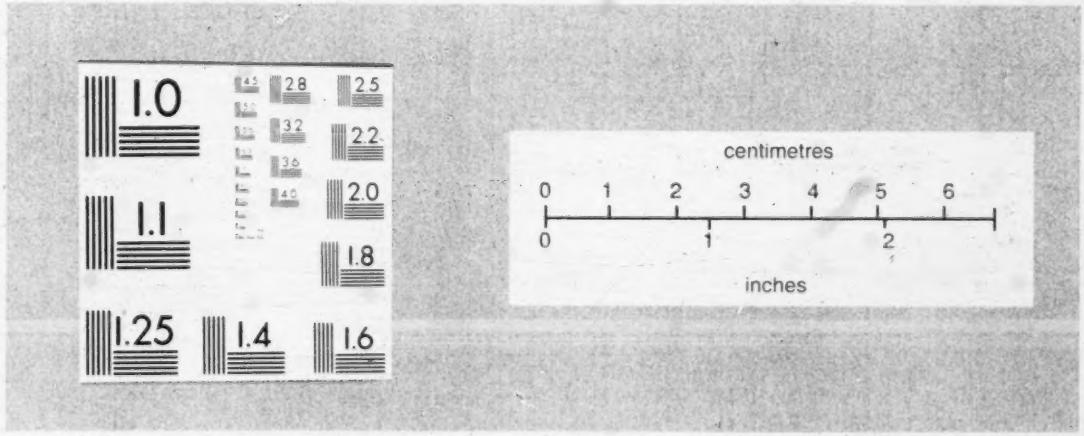

and we aim to bring that power into effect by commencement order in the spring next year. This will allow time to produce and consult on the guidance that will be needed by those who will be exercising the new power. We are also looking at the feasibility of establishing a national database of badge holders; the introduction of smartcard technology; increasing penalties for abuse and misuse of the scheme and re-introducing a hologram onto the blue badge as an additional security measure.

Interaction with local authorities

Local authorities were involved throughout the review process and were able to feed in their views and make representations to the Department on all aspects of the scheme. In taking forward the remaining recommendations we will continue to involve and consult local authorities.

Provision of disabled person parking spaces

The provision of parking spaces is a matter for local authorities. They have a wide range of powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to provide parking places, including designated bays for disabled people. The decision to provide such bays is ultimately for the local authority.

Bus and Cycle Lanes

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many miles of new cycle lanes have been provided using public funds since 1997, broken down by local authority; [202770]

(2) how many and what length of *(a)* bus lanes and *(b)* cycle lanes have been designated on roads in each of the last 10 years, broken down by local authority. [202771]

Charlotte Atkins: Information on bus and cycle lanes in England for the financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 is set out in the tables which have been placed in the Libraries of the House. A full set of data for the years required are not available.

The information is provided by local authorities on an annual basis as part of their Annual Performance report on the Local Transport Plans. It is not verified by the Department. Responsibility for the accuracy of the data rests with individual authorities. The data are incomplete and include estimates.

A breakdown of cycle lanes by London borough is not available. TfL estimates that there are approximately 300 km of on-road cycle lanes.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [202414]

Charlotte Atkins: The DfT units or associated bodies that currently have responsibility for vacant property are as follows.

The Highways Agency holds property in relation to the Government's Targeted Programme of Investment (TPI) in the strategic road network but the assets change year-on-year as the requirements of the TPI dictate. Properties identified as empty were either surplus property for sale, empty property awaiting refurbishment/letting and/or empty property awaiting demolition for road schemes or empty beyond economic repair. The annual cost of these properties in 2002–03 and 2003–04 were £545,000 and £582,000 respectively. These costs included utility costs, security, management fees and the annual repair costs to bring the properties into a lettable or saleable condition. The value of the properties was £7.159 million in 2002–03 and £17.821 million in 2003–04.

The Driving Standards Agency has only one empty property, which is valued at £320,000 and has running costs of approximately £3,000 per annum.

The General Lighthouse Authorities comprising the Trinity Lighthouse Service and Northern Lighthouse Board spent £18,000 in 2002–03 and £13,000 in 2003–04 on empty properties. The properties are mainly former lighthouse keepers' living accommodation and have not been valued. The properties have been retained because it is not possible to effectively separate the properties whilst maintaining the security of the operational lighthouses or it is difficult to sell or lease the properties due to their remote locations.

The British Railways Board (Residuary) Ltd. (BRBR) are a wholly owned subsidiary of the Strategic Rail Authority and is responsible for managing the majority of the remaining property, rights and liabilities of the British Railways Board. BRBR own a number property with values of £137.1 million at the end of 2002–03 and £132.5 million as at the end of 2003–04. BRBR are unable to provide the value of the empty properties as their records are not kept in this way and some sites are part rented which makes it particularly difficult to determine the value. The cost of managing freehold vacant office space was £689,000 in 2002–03 and £583,000 in 2003–04.

The Department has acquired properties adjacent to the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link which have become empty because of the impact of construction work. These are generally sold on the open market as soon as construction is complete but to obtain the value of these would involve disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [202413]

Charlotte Atkins: The energy costs recorded by the Department over 2003–03 and 2003–04 are as follows.

£

	Electricity		Gas		Oil		Total	
	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04	2002–03	2003–04
GMH	276,995	305,312	18,925	21,798	0	0	295,920	327,110
AAIB	9,300	8,900	0	0	9,500	8,800	18,800	17,700
MAIB	3,606	5,132	506	730	0	0	4,112	5,862
DSA	210,678	196,735	0	60,419	0	0	210,678	257,154
DVLA	560,399	557,518	120,693	129,053	0	0	681,092	686,571
HA	172,006	174,428	36,959	36,721	2,925	1,942	211,890	213,091
MCA	380,050	377,329	68,006	73,991	0	0	448,056	451,320
VGA	11,698	6,848	1,321	1,628	4,654	5,175	17,673	13,651
VOSA	301,027	417,660	76,509	147,659	0	22,302	377,536	587,621
Total	1,925,759	2,049,862	322,918	471,999	17,079	38,219	2,265,757	2,560,080

Overall the increase in costs is 13 per cent. although the figures for costs alone can be misleading if not placed within the wider context of changes in unit price, areas measured, levels of consumption and improved record keeping. The DfT estate comprises some 1,170 properties of varying size, use and nature of occupation and it is therefore not possible to make any comprehensive or definitive statements about energy cost increases on such a diverse estate, which may be attributable to these and other factors.

Increases and decreases in unit charges and area occupied can also mask efforts to improve energy efficiency so a better measure of performance is consumption where the overall usage was down 2.2 per cent. over the same period. For more details on consumption I would refer the hon. Member to my answer of 20 October 2004 to the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Green), *Official Report*, columns 687–88W.

The Department will continue to aim to reduce energy consumption and meet other energy targets set out in the Framework for Sustainable Development in the Government Estate.

E-mail

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for all announcements and publications issued by his Department and those public bodies reporting to him. [203683]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport does not currently offer an automatic e-mail notification facility from its website (www.dft.gov.uk). We have plans to make one available by the middle of 2005.

The News Distribution Service (NDS) issues all news releases on behalf of the Department, and posts them on the GNN website for universal reference. Any bona fide media practitioner can opt to have these announcements sent to them by e-mail, or by a variety of alternative distribution mechanisms.

The Department contributes to info4local, the cross-departmental portal website for local authorities, which offers an e-mail alert service.

Public bodies are responsible for their own announcements and publications. This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Leigh-Manchester Busway

Andy Burnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to reach a final decision on the planning inquiry and subsequent work on the Leigh to Manchester guided busway. [204231]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* Following a public inquiry into this scheme under the Transport and Works Act 1992, the Department asked the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) to provide additional environmental information. GMPTE provided this further material in October 2004 and gave an opportunity for interested parties to make representations to the Department by 2 December. We have now asked GMPTE for their comments on the six representations received. When we receive their response we will consider whether we should re-open the public inquiry or deal with the new issues by means of written exchanges. It is therefore too early to say when we will be in a position to decide the application.

Ministerial Visits

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when *(a)* he and *(b)* other Ministers from his Department have visited Switzerland; and what plans he has for future visits by Ministers from his Department. [203600]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed on 29 May 2002. Since that date no Ministers from the Department have undertaken a departmental visit to Switzerland and none is currently planned.

Motorway Driving Tests

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce a requirement for learner drivers prior to taking their driving tests, to take theoretical instruction on driving on motorways, dependent on the area in which the driving test is to be taken. [204181]

Mr. Jamieson: There is no evidence to suggest that newly qualified drivers are generally more dangerous than other drivers on motorways. We therefore have no plans at present to lift the current restriction on learner drivers using motorways. However, the theory test, including the hazard perception test, covers driving on motorways and other high speed roads, so learners are expected to acquire the appropriate theoretical knowledge. The Highway Code and the Driving Standards Agency's Driving Manual provide theoretical instruction to support this.

Learner drivers are also expected to gain experience on high-speed roads other than motorways before attempting the practical test and are expected to demonstrate their skills on such roads where practicable.

Newly qualified drivers may also take the Pass Plus course of training which includes motorway driving with an Approved Driving Instructor. The scheme is taken up by some 20 per cent. of pupils who pass their test.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agency Staff

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people are employed by *(a)* Forest Enterprise, *(b)* the Meat Hygiene Service, *(c)* the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution and *(d)* the Sustainable Development Commission; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of each body. [203744]

Alun Michael: The Forest Enterprise is an Executive agency of the Forestry Commission which has supplied the following information. The Forestry Enterprise employs 750 full time equivalents in England and its net operating costs were £22.7 million.

The Meat Hygiene Service is an Executive agency of the Food Standards Agency and ministerial responsibility lies with the Department for Health.

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution and the Sustainable Development Commission are advisory NDPBs and the running costs for each are included with Defra's accounts but are not separately identifiable. The total sponsorship and/or funding cost to the Department (which would include remuneration and expenses of members, administrative costs, research/programme funding and any other cost to the department directly related to the sponsorship of the body) for the last financial year is given as follows. The figures do not include funding given for specific additional projects that have been undertaken during the period.

Body	*Staff employed*	*Expenditure/ funding by Defra (£)*
Sustainable Development Commission	0	679,000
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution	12	956,000

We keep these bodies under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that its functions are still required and that the they still provide the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the membership is of the British Waterways Board; what the *(a)* cost of salaries and expenses to members and *(b)* running costs was of the board in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service the board. [203759]

Alun Michael: Membership of the British Waterways Board is set out in its annual report and accounts which are laid before Parliament each year. In 2003–04, the board consisted of a chairman, vice-chairman and nine members. The cost of salaries and expenses was £208,000 and running costs £22,000. The board has no dedicated staff.

Cockling

Mr. Collins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (1) if she will make a statement on plans to introduce a licensing system for cockling *(a)* in Morecambe Bay and *(b)* elsewhere; [203797]

(2) what assistance her Department is offering to Cumbria police in their efforts to regulate the cockling in Morecambe Bay; [203799]

(3) what estimate she has made of the tonnage of immature cockles removed from Morecambe Bay in the past 12 months; and what assessment she has made of *(a)* the ecological and economic consequences of overfishing of cockles in Morecambe Bay and *(b)* trends in the (i) number and (ii) point of origin of cocklers operating in Morecambe Bay. [203800]

Mr. Bradshaw: Management of local inshore fisheries is the responsibility of Sea Fisheries Committees.

North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (NWNWSFC) is responsible for managing the cockle fishery in Morecambe Bay, and runs a permit scheme for one of the cockle beds within Morecambe Bay. NWNWSFC are currently considering extending this scheme to cover the whole of their district, and the Government are currently considering how we can best support this proposal.

NWNWSFC are responsible for enforcing their own byelaws. There have been a number of joint enforcement exercises planned and executed with, among others, the local police, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Inland Revenue, and Immigration Service.

Fishing is inherently dangerous. On Morecambe Bay the problem is mainly one of ensuring people in control of commercial cockling have proper regard for their own health and safety and that of their workers, taking account of the Bay's tidal conditions and characteristics. The HSE has drawn up and issued safety guidelines to those involved in the fishery. These provide the basis for inspections on the Bay, and at other tidal areas and estuaries around the British coastline. Since the unfortunate tragedy in February the most relevant local organisations have come together in the "Morecambe Bay Intertidal Shellfisheries Joint Liaison Group" to improve the management of cockling activity on the Bay through exchange of intelligence, and co-ordinated enforcement activity.

NWNWSFC monitor cockle stocks in Morecambe Bay and have powers to introduce appropriate management measures should they consider the pattern of exploitation warrants it.

The Morecambe Bay Intertidal Shellfisheries Joint Liaison Group regularly reviews the activities of cocklers in Morecambe Bay and is aware of the numbers involved and, in many cases, their national origin.

Commercial Whaling

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will outline the Government's policy towards commercial whaling; and if she will make a statement. [204679]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 14 December 2004]*: The Government are opposed to all forms of whaling other than limited whaling by indigenous people to meet objectively defined subsistence needs. We strongly support the International Whaling Commission's moratorium on commercial whaling and believe that properly regulated whale-watching is the only truly sustainable use of whale resources.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representation was made by the Government to the International Whaling Commission meeting in Borgholm, Sweden, in November this year; what discussions took place; what conclusions were reached by the delegates of the meeting; and if she will make a statement. [204680]

Mr. Bradshaw: *[holding answer 14 December 2004]*: The UK delegation at the Revised Management Scheme (RMS) Working Group meeting was led by Richard Cowan CBE, the UK Commissioner to the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The meeting discussed the possible content of an RMS, the corpus of regulatory measures required to control commercial whaling should such whaling ever be resumed. The aim of the Working Group was to draw up instructions for a Small Drafting Group (SDG) on which the UK was also represented, to draw up draft RMS text for possible adoption into the Schedule to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling at the next annual meeting of the IWC in Ulsan, South Korea, in June 2005.

The UK is seeking a comprehensive RMS, which would ensure that any future approved commercial whaling could not pose a threat to whale conservation and that catch limits and other rules would be strictly observed and seen to be so. No definitive conclusions were reached on any of the key elements of the RMS. Such text as the SDG was able to prepare therefore contains variants in square brackets reflecting the differing points of view of participants.

Some issues of a largely technical nature were referred to specialist groups, which will conduct business by correspondence and report back to the next Working Group meeting in Copenhagen in March 2005.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for her Department in each of the last two years. [202351]

Alun Michael: The estimate of the cost to the Department of ministerial cars and drivers in each of the last two years is £399,684.01 in the financial year to April 2004 and £369,855.17 in the financial year to April 2003. We do not hold information on travel by taxi centrally and this could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Telephones

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the use of telephones in her Department by members of staff for their personal use relating to *(a)* domestic calls and *(b)* international calls; and if she will make a statement. [204105]

Alun Michael: The Department does not object to the reasonable use of telephones for personal use as part of its objective to achieve a fair work/life balance for its staff. Line managers have a responsibility to monitor usage. Domestic calls are permitted but the majority of international calls are barred on all but those extensions needing access for official purposes. Call logging is used if abuse is suspected.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she has taken to ensure the telephones in her Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [204106]

Alun Michael: Extensions have international call barring. The only exceptions are where there are essential operational needs for such access. Call logging is used if abuse is suspected.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the estimated cost to her Department of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic numbers and *(b)* international numbers was in the last year for which figures are available. [204107]

Alun Michael: The Department permits reasonable telephone access for staff to make personal calls to domestic numbers. Where there is a managed telecommunications service, call charges are for the most part absorbed into a fixed extension cost. In cases where telecommunications services are owned by the Department, call charges are incurred for domestic calls, although without intensive call logging it is impossible to differentiate between personal and business calls. The majority of extensions have international call barring unless such access is an operational necessity.

Emissions

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department has taken in the last 12 months to investigate the potential use of continuous sampling technology for the monitoring of emissions from waste incinerators for dioxin levels. [203367]

Mr. Morley: I understand that the Environment Agency has finished field tests of continuous dioxin sampling and analysis equipment. Reports on the field tests are still being written and will be available early next year. The Environment Agency will consider the regulatory implications of the conclusions of the reports when they are published.

Environmental Offences

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions resulted in *(a)* convictions and

(b) custodial sentences in each year since 1999 for offences related to (i) water resources, (ii) flood defences, (iii) fisheries, (iv) navigation, (v) process industry regulation, (vi) radioactive substances, (vii) waste and (viii) water quality as recorded in the National Enforcement Database; and what the average fines were where custodial sentences were awarded (A) in total and (B) broken down by region. [200915]

Alun Michael: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Environment agency: successful prosecutions and custodial sentences, calendar years 1999 to 2004

Date of report: 29 November 2004

	Total convictions/custodial sentences					
	[1]1999		*2000*		*2001*	
Fisheries	0	0	27	0	22	0
Flood defence	2	0	1	0	2	0
Navigation	3	0	6	0	3	0
PIR	6	0	12	0	7	0
RAS	3	0	3	0	11	0
Water quality	177	0	219	0	234	0
Water resources	6	0	21	0	10	0
Waste	246	3	408	5	471	10

	Total convictions/custodial sentences					
	2002		*2003*		*[2]2004*	
Fisheries	48	0	34	0	28	0
Flood defence	1	0	5	0	9	0
Navigation	15	0	32	0	20	0
PIR	3	0	5	0	1	0
RAS	1	0	3	0	2	0
Water quality	220	0	167	0	154	1
Water resources	11	0	6	0	15	0
Waste	498	4	406	7	374	7

[1] April to December.
[2] January to October.

Environmental Pollution Royal Commission

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding her Department has allocated to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution in each of the last 10 years; what plans she has for future levels of funding for the organisation; and if she will make a statement. [204177]

Mr. Morley: Over the last 10 years, the Department has allocated funding as provided in the table below:

£000

Financial year	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*
1995–96	726	742
1996–97	729	732
1997–98	788	773
1998–99	769	778
1999–2000	819	835
2000–01	785	784
2001–02	1,046	1,032
2002–03	999	970
2003–04	967	958
2004–05	979	1,010

Currently there are no plans to change the funding level of the RCEP.

Environmental Regulation

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department takes to make sure that the cost and rigour of environmental regulation in the UK compares favourably with that of current and prospective members of the European Union. [203667]

Mr. Morley: All Defra's policies are developed using impact assessments that consider the economic, social and environmental effects of different policy options. The majority of UK environment legislation comes from the EU and, to ensure the quality of legislation, Defra must work effectively with our EU partners and the European institutions to shape policy. Defra has an excellent international reputation for usefully influencing EU legislation. Notable recent successes in the EU include bringing about changes to the REACH chemical proposal to reduce its burden on business.

Defra's internal organisation promotes detailed scrutiny of policy proposals during their development. Economists form part of policy teams in advising both on costs and benefits and on the best ways to achieve policy goals. In April 2004, Defra's Better Regulation Unit (BRU) was enlarged to promote the Better Regulation agenda. It plays a role in scrutinising policy and in advising policy teams on aspects of policy making. The BRU are also undertaking studies into red tape and the cumulative burden on business of the whole stock of Defra regulations. Here, as in many other areas of Defra's work, Defra benefits from close contact and comparison with other EU member states. A recent example is the work done in the BRU to reduce red tape and administrative burdens on business, building on a Dutch methodology. One of the nine principles of policy making promoted in Defra is the need to be outward looking—to draw on experience in other countries and regions.

External Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total external spending by her Department was on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by her Department over this period; and if she will make a statement. [202368]

Alun Michael: From information held centrally, there has been no external spending by the Department on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years to date.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total external spending by her Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the past two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by her Department over this period; and if she will make a statement. [202358]

Alun Michael: From information held centrally, and for the last two years to date, the Department has spent a total of £415,593 on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants. For 2003–04 the expenditure was £80,000 and for 2004–05 to date the expenditure is £335,593. Information on how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over the two-year period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; and what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

As part of its preparations for, and implementation of, the Gershon Value for money agenda in Defra, Pareto or detailed expenditure distribution analysis of departmental expenditure on professional services is now being undertaken, and will be made available publicly in due course. The analysis will define how many consultancy firms have been used by the Department over the past financial year.

GM Oilseed Rape

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations she received from *(a)* biotechnology companies, *(b)* environmental groups and *(c)* farming organisations regarding the application for a licence to import GT73 genetically modified oilseed rape into the European Union for use as animal feed (i) before and (ii) after 20 June. [204158]

Mr. Morley: Defra Ministers have not, either before or after 20 June 2004, had any direct representations from biotechnology companies, or farming organisations regarding this application. I have received one letter from an environmental organisation which included, among other issues, a representation on this case. The Application by Monsanto Europe SA/NV for consent to import and market oilseed rape grain GT73 under Directive 2001/18 was made through the Netherlands Competent Authority. As part of the procedure there is a mandatory EU-wide system of written consultation for each commercial GM product application before any decision is made. This provides all members of the public throughout the EU with the opportunity to make representations, which are taken into account during the regulatory process. The UK authorities assessed the dossier after the Netherlands had submitted their opinion and considered that further information was necessary before coming to a decision. Monsanto subsequently provided some further information.

Land Reform

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the policy of her Department is on land reform. [201672]

Alun Michael: The Department has no proposals for land reform.

Nitrates

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with farming bodies regarding the application of organic nitrogen in nitrate vulnerable zones. [203693]

Mr. Morley: The nitrates directive outlines the rules, including those restricting the rate and timing of organic manure applications, that must be included within a member states' action programme.

In December 1998, Defra's predecessor Department established an action programme within the nitrate vulnerable zones (NVZs) in England and Wales. During the development of this action programme, those Departments formally consulted with stakeholders, including farming bodies, on a number of separate occasions. Specifically:

November 1995: consultation on Proposed Measures to Apply in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones and Draft Regulations Transposing the Directive in England and Wales.

December 1997: consultation on Draft Regulations Establishing the Action Programme Measures to Apply in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in England and Wales.

In December 2002, Defra established an action programme within the additional NVZs designated in that year. This action programme was effectively identical to that established in the original NVZs in 1998. Nevertheless, the Department provided the opportunity for further comment during the following consultation:

December 2001: The Protection of waters against agricultural nitrate pollution in England: How should England implement the 1991 Nitrates Directive?

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Scottish Executive regarding *(a)* nitrate vulnerable zones and *(b)* nitrate derogations. [203694]

Mr. Morley: The Department has regular contact with the Scottish Executive on all matters regarding the implementation of the Nitrates Directive. Additionally, the Scottish Executive are a member of the project board that oversees the development of research in relation to the intended UK justification to the EU Commission in support of a derogation to allow a higher application limit for manure nitrogen within its Action Programmes.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make representations to obtain a derogation to allow organic nitrogen to be applied in nitrate vulnerable zones up to 250kg per hectare. [203695]

Mr. Morley: Member States may allow a different application limit than the baseline of 170kgN/ha set by the Nitrates Directive, though they must justify that decision to the EU Commission. As a result of earlier discussions with the Commission, the Department has initiated research to support the UK justification for the inclusion of a higher application limit within its Action Programmes.

Nuclear Waste

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the potential for plasma gasification melting technology to deal with nuclear waste. [202091]

Mr. Morley: The Department has made no such assessment. However, the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM), which has been set up by UK Government and the devolved Administrations, is currently considering a wide range of options for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste and is very happy to receive suggestions via its website—www.corwm.org.uk.

Oil Pollution

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations she has received from *(a)* the Environment Agency and *(b)* the Environmental Industries Commission on oil pollution of inland waters; and if she will make a statement. [201130]

Mr. Morley: My officials are in regular contact with the Environment Agency which is responsible for enforcing the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 which were introduced to prevent pollution of surface and ground waters. I have received representations from the Environmental Industries Commission relating to its report "Oil under the Carpet" which calls for the regulations to be strengthened. My view remains that this would be premature, given that the requirements do not come fully into force until September 2005 and there has already been an encouraging fall in the number of oil pollution incidents reported since the regulations were made.

Organophosphates

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what products containing organophosphates are authorised for use in the United Kingdom, in *(a)* agriculture, *(b)* horticulture, *(c)* industrial and *(d)* domestic circumstances; by which companies each is manufactured; what quantities she estimates were supplied in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement on their future use. [204162]

Alun Michael: A list of products for use in agriculture and horticulture that contain organophosphates and are currently approved by the Pesticides Safety Directorate is provided in the attached table. The table also lists separately the organophosphate veterinary products approved for use in domestic circumstances and as sheep dips. There are no approved pesticide products containing organophosphates approved in domestic gardens, industrial products and domestic uses other than plant protection products are approved by the Health and Safety Executive.

Information on the quantities of each pesticide is not available as these data are not gathered by the Pesticides Safety Directorate. Data on total sales are collected for the purposes of the levy, but this does not include information on individual products. The Veterinary Medicines Directorate does not collect comprehensive data on the sales of veterinary medicines containing organophosphates (OPs), other than sheep dips. This is because OP sheep dips have always been regarded as presenting the greatest potential risk to human health. These sales data are collected under the adverse reaction surveillance scheme, and have been used to put into context the numbers of serious human adverse reactions being reported for OP sheep dips. The number of such adverse reactions reported to other OP based veterinary medicines is negligible. This year we have received no adverse reaction reports to any OP based veterinary medicine, including sheep dips.

The most recent figures available, which cover sales in the year 2003, show that there were 54,000 kg of organophosphate active ingredients sold in such products. Given a sheep population of around 36 million in the UK, this equates to about 1.5 grams of active used on each sheep per year.

Future use of organophosphates

Veterinary Medicines:

The independent scientific Veterinary Products Committee, which advises agriculture and health Ministers on all aspects of veterinary medicines, takes the safety of organophosphates very seriously and keeps their use in veterinary medicines under regular review. It has recently confirmed its advice that, on the basis of the current scientific evidence, there is no need to take any further regulatory action on these products, provided they are used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

Pesticides:

All agricultural pesticides are subject to strict regulatory control and must be approved by Ministers before they can be marketed or used in the UK. Data are thoroughly evaluated by the Pesticides Safety Directorate. PSD's evaluation is subject to independent scrutiny by the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. All pesticide approvals are subject to a regular review programme including organophosphates, and a specific review may be activated at any time if evidence emerges concerning their safety. If appropriate, an approval can be restricted or revoked entirely.

Currently approved pesticide products containing organophosphates

Product	*MAFF No.*	*Approval Holder's*	*Agricultural*	*Horticultural*
Actellic D	M10509	Syngenta Crop Protection U K Ltd.	X	—
Actellic Smoke Generator No.10	M10448	Octavius Hunt Ltd.	X	—
Actellic Smoke Generator No. 20	M06627	Zeneca Ltd.	X	—
Actellic Smoke Generator No. 20	M10540	Octavius Hunt Ltd.	X	X
Agriguard Chlorpyrifos	M10626	Tronsan Ltd.	X	X
Aliette 80-WG	M09156	Aventis CropScience U K Ltd.	—	X
Aliette 80 WG	M11213	Bayer CropScience Ltd.	—	X
Alpha Chlorpyrifos 48EC	M04821	Makhteshim-Agan (UK) Ltd.	X	X
Aventis Mocap 10G	M09973	Aventis CropScience U K Ltd.	X	X
Ballad	M11659	Cheminova Agro A S	X	X
Barclay Clinch II	M08596	Barclay Chemicals Manufacturing Ltd.	X	X
Barclay Clinch II	M11346	Barclay Chemicals (R & D) Ltd	X	X

Currently approved pesticide products containing organophosphates

Product	*MAFF No*	*Approval Holder(s)*	*Agricultural*	*Horticultural*
BASF Dimethoate 40	M00199	BASF plc	X	X
Basilex	M07494	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd.	X	X
Chevron 48	M10645	DAPT Agrochemicals Ltd.	X	X
Choir	M09778	Cheminova Agro A/S	X	X
Cleancrop Pychlorex	M11681	Chimac-Agriphar SA	X	X
Crossfire 480	M08141	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Crossfire 480	M09929	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	—	X
CYREN	M08358	Cheminova Agro A/S	—	X
Cyren	M11028	Cheminova A/S	X	X
Danadim	M09583	Cheminova Agro A/S	X	X
Danadim	M11550	Cheminova Agro A/S	X	X
Dispatch	M08139	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	—	X
Duramitex	M08664	Harkers Ltd.	X	X
Dursban 4	M07815	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Dursban WG	M09153	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Equity	M11520	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Fumite Pirimiphos Methyl Smoke	M00941	Octavius Hunt Ltd.	—	X
Fyfanon 440	M11014	Cheminova Agro A/S	—	X
Fyfanon 440	M11134	Cheminova Agro A/S	—	X
Greencrop Pontoon	M09667	Greencrop Technology Ltd.	X	X
Greencrop Storeclean 225	M11098	Greencrop Technology Ltd.	X	X
IT. Fosetyl-AL	M11717	IT Agro Ltd.	—	X
Lorsban 480	M08076	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Lorsban T	M07813	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	—	X
Lorsban WG	M10139	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Lorsban WG	M11962	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Malathion 60	M08018	United Phosphorus Ltd.	X	X
Maraud	M09274	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	—	X
Me2 Cindy	M10634	Me2 Crop Protection Limited	X	X
Mocap 10G	M10003	Bayer CropScience Ltd.	X	X
Nemathorin 10G	M11003	ISK Biosciences Europe SA	X	X
Prostore157 UI	M12017	FMC Chemical s.p.r.l	X	X
Prostore 420 EC	M12036	FMC Chemical s.p.r.l	X	X
Prostore 420EC	M12210	FMC Chemical s.p.r.l	X	X
Pyrinex 48EC	M08644	Makhteshim-Agan (UK) Ltd.	X	X
Reldan 22	M08191	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	X	X
Rizolex	M09673	Sumitomo Chemical Agro Europe SA	X	X
Rizolex 50 WP	M07272	Sumitomo Chemical Agro Europe SA	X	X
Rizolex Flowable	M09358	Sumitomo Chemical Agro Europe SA	X	X
Rizolex Flowable	M11399	Sumitomo Chemical Agro Europe SA	X	—
Roger L40	M07611	Isagro S. p. A	X	X
Sector	M10492	Cheminova Agro A/S	X	X
Spannit	M08744	SumiAgro (UK) Ltd.	X	X
Spannit Granules	M10935	SumiAgro (UK) Ltd.	—	X
Standon Chlorpyrifos 48	M08286	Standon Chemicals Ltd.	—	X
Standon Fosetyl-AL 80WG	M10667	Standon Chemicals Ltd.	—	X
Suscon Green Soil Insecticide	M06312	Dow AgroSciences Ltd.	—	X

Currently authorised veterinary medicinal products containing organophosphates

Product	*Marketing Authorisation Holder*	*Domestic pet treatments*	*Sheep Dip*
Armitage Pet Care Protect Flea and Tick Collar for Dogs	Virbac Sa	X	—
Armitage Pet Care Protect Flea Collar for Cats	Virbac Sa	X	—
Bob Martin Flash Cat Reflective Collar for Cats and Kittens Over 6 Months Old	Virbac Sa	X	—
Bob Martin Flea and Tick Collar for Dogs	Virbac Sa	X	—
Bob Martin Flea and Tick Collar Plus Coat Conditioner	Virbac Sa	X	—
Bob Martin Flea Collar for Cats	Virbac Sa	X	—
Bob Martin Soft Touch Flea Collar	Virbac Sa	X	—
Bob Martin Velvet Flea Collar for Cats and Kittens	Virbac Sa	X	—
Catovel Pretty Care Elasticated Insecticidal Collar for Cats	Virbac Sa	X	—
Coopers Ectoforce Sheep Dip	Schering Plough	—	—
Friskies Cat Flea Collar	Alfamed Sa	X	—
Friskies Flea and Tick Collar for Dogs	Alfamed Sa	X	—
Friskies Pro Control Flea and Tick Collar for Dogs	Alfamed Sa	X	—
Friskies Pro Control Flea Collar for Cats	Alfamed Sa	X	—
Good Girl Flea Collar for Cats	Beaphar Ltd	X	—
Hi-Craft Flea and Tick Collar for Dogs	Beaphar Ltd	X	—
Johnson's Flea Guard Collar for Cats	Virbac Sa	X	—
Osmonds Gold Fleece Sheep Dip	Cross Vetpharm Group Ltd	X	—
Otello Insecticidal Collar for Cats	Virbac Sa	X	—
Otello Insecticidal Collar for Dogs	Virbac Sa	X	—
Otello Insecticidal Collar for Large Dogs	Virbac Sa	X	—
Paracide Plus	Animax Ltd	X	—

Currently authorised veterinary medicinal products containing organophosphates

Product	*Marketing Authorisation Holder*	*Dermal (in pet treatment)*	*Sheep Dip*
Pestroy 3 Months Cat Collar	Virbac Sa	\	—
Pet Star Dog Flea And Tick Collar	Beaphar Ltd	\	—
Prevender Cat	Virbac Sa	\	—
Preventef Insecticidal Collar for Dogs	Virbac Sa	\	—
Preventef Insecticidal Collar for Large Dogs	Virbac Sa	\	—
Preventef Insecticidal Collar for Puppies and Young Dogs	Virbac Sa	\	—
Protection 300 Insecticidal Collar	Virbac Sa	\	—
Salmosan[1]	Novartis Animal Vaccines Ltd	\	—
Sergeants Flea Collar for Cats	Conagra Pet Products	\	—
Sergeants Flea Collar for Dogs	Conagra Pet Products	\	—
Sergeants Flea Collar for Large Dogs	Conagra Pet Products	\	—
Seven Seas Kytzyme Flea Rid Luxury Velvet Collar	Virbac Sa	\	—
Seven Seas Vetzyme Flea Rid Reflective Flea Collar	Virbac Sa	\	—
Seven Seas Vetzyme Flea Rid Reflective Flea Collar for Dogs	Virbac Sa	\	—
Seven Seas Vetzyme Flea Rid Reflective Flea Collar for Large Dogs	Virbac Sa	\	—
Twin Pack two Collars Bob Martin Flea and Tick for Dogs and Puppies Over 12 Weeks Old	Virbac Sa	\	
Whiskas Care Flea Collar	Beaphar Ltd	\	
Wilko Long Lasting Flea Collar for Cats	Virbac Sa	\	

[1] Approved for use as a commercial fisheries product

Recycling

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total value was of contracts between community recycling organisations and local authorities in England in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002 and *(d)* 2003. [203664]

Mr. Morley: Defra does not hold this information. The hon. Member may like to contact the Community Recycling Network (www.crn.org.uk and 0117 942 0142).

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many community recycling organisations were registered in England to collect waste in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002 and *(d)* 2003. [203665]

Mr. Morley: This information is not held centrally, as not all community recycling organisations are required to be registered with the Environment Agency.

Sea Defence Projects

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what procurement policy the Government have in place for the use of timber in sea defence projects; and what steps she takes to ensure that all such timber is *(a)* procured from legal and sustainable sources and *(b)* certified by one of the two systems the Central Point on Expertise on Timber has identified as guaranteeing legality and sustainability; [202089]

(2) if she will list the sea defence projects planned for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 which will use timber in their construction, stating (i) what type of timber will be used, (ii) whether this timber is procured from legal and sustainable sources and (iii) whether this timber is certified by one of the two systems the Central Point on Expertise on Timber has identified as guaranteeing legality and sustainability. [202088]

Mr. Morley: Defra funds most of the Environment Agency's flood defence activities and provides grant aid on a project-by-project basis to the other flood and coastal defence operating authorities (local authorities and internal drainage boards) to support their investment in improvement projects to manage flood and coastal erosion risk.

In 2000, the Government announced that Departments and agencies, including the Environment Agency, must actively seek to procure timber and timber products from sources independently validated as legal and sustainably managed. In 2002, Defra Ministers wrote to all English local authorities to encourage them to adopt responsible timber procurement policies. However, choice of materials to be used in construction of defences and whether they are obtained from legal and sustainable sources is a matter for the relevant operating authority. I regret therefore that parts (i), (ii) and (iii) of question 202088 could not be answered without incurring disproportionate cost.

I understand that the Environment Agency, as a non-departmental body of Defra, purchases timber in accordance with the Government's timber procurement policy. Currently this policy is to require contractors to supply timber products that derive from legally harvested trees. Bidders for Government contracts are invited to offer timber from sustainable sources as a higher quality variant and such offers are given preference where they offer value for money.

Timber used by the Agency in sea defence projects is predominantly tropical hardwood. The Central Point on Expertise on Timber (CPET) has concluded that all five certification schemes it examined provide assurance of compliance with Government requirements for legal timber. CPET further concluded that the Forestry Stewardship Council and the Canadian Standards Association will also assure central departments that timber products derive from sustainably managed forests. However there is very little certified hardwood available that is suitable for marine work.

The Agency is working with its supply chain to encourage more production of tropical hardwood that can be independently verified as legally harvested from sustainably managed forests. The Agency currently does its own auditing of timber use in the absence of any other independent verification.

The following table shows coastal defence projects on which authorities are likely to incur expenditure in years

2004–05 and 2005–06 and where timber is either likely to be used or to have been used. The table is based on forward planning project information provided recently by the Environment Agency and by local authorities in the summer and should be regarded as indicative rather than a definitive list.

Authority	*Project*	*Estimated start year*
Allerdale borough council	Maryport Harbour Flood and Coast Defence	On-going
Arun district council	Elmer Phase 3	2005–06
Arun district council	Felpham Beach Nourishment	2005–06
Bournemouth borough council	Groyne Building Programme Stage 26	On-going
Canterbury city council	Tankerton Sea Defences—Phase 3	On-going
Canterbury city council	Whitstable Coastal Defences	2004–05
Dover district council	Kingsdown and Walmer Beach Management	On-going
Eastbourne borough council	Eastbourne Beach Management	2004–05
East Riding of Yorkshire	Withernsea Southern Revetment	2004–05
Environment Agency	Pett, near Rye, East Sussex	On-going
Environment Agency	Bulverhythe, St. Leonards on Sea, East Sussex	2005–06
Hastings borough council	Hastings Beach Management (Years 1–5)	2004–05
Havant borough council	Shingle Recycling, Seafront, Hayling Island	2004–05
Havant borough council	Beach Nourishment, Eastoke, Hayling Island	2005–06
Portsmouth city council	Old Portsmouth Flood Protection Works	On-going
Rother district council	Cooden to Cliff End Coastal Defence	2005–06
Waveney district council	Southwold Town Defence Improvements	2005–06
West Dorset district council	West Bay Coastal Defence, Harbour Improvements and Sea Defences	On-going

Sewage Discharges (River Thames)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much sewage was discharged into the Thames in each month of the last four years. [202071]

Mr. Morley: Table 1 sets out the monthly flow data of sewage discharges from Abingdon, Cassington, Little Marlow and Windsor treatment works directly to the upper freshwater section of the Thames. Secondary and more stringent treatment is provided to the sewage prior to discharge at Abingdon, Little Marlow and Windsor. Discharges from Cassington receive secondary treatment, and are to receive more stringent treatment in 2005.

Table 1

Month	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
January	2,467,930	1,364,441	2,662,071	1,717,430
February	2,559,654	1,758,236	1,824,948	1,560,620
March	2,732,630	1,736,920	1,749,267	1,509,818
April	2,476,747	1,395,060	1,543,983	1,576,418
May	2,234,910	1,531,603	1,656,310	1,330,036
June	1,872,673	1,393,458	1,568,915	1,098,837
July	1,740,616	1,355,047	1,391,433	1,201,917
August	1,557,598	1,618,557	1,287,003	1,394,409
September	1,515,436	1,528,801	1,171,360	1,482,751
October	1,596,579	1,706,734	1,198,676	1,627,493
November	1,268,180	2,047,635	1,433,187	1,709,499
December	1,120,988	1,997,761	1,564,898	n a

Note

All figures are in cubic metres.

Sewage discharges to the Thames estuary are made by three water companies Thames, Anglian and Southern. The following tables concern discharges made by Thames Water.

Table 2 sets out the average monthly volumes of fully treated, to secondary standards, and partially treated, because of excess flows during wet weather, sewage discharges to the Thames from Beckton, Crossness, Long Reach, Mogden and Riverside treatment works. I have provided the monthly average as the volumes are fairly constant throughout the year.

Table 2

	Fully treated sewage from five treatment works	*Partially treated sewage from five treatment works*
2001	75,883,503	1,851,077
2002	73,356,102	2,209,715
2003	75,878,615	1,234,308
2004	70,313,523	1,123,331

Table 3 sets out the monthly calculated volumes of untreated sewage discharged to the Thames from the five largest pumping stations during wet weather. As no data are available for the other overflows along the Thames Tideway, it is estimated that on average these volumes represent 60 per cent. of the total discharge from London's combined drainage system at these times.

Table 3

Month	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
January	3,471,000	3,009,000	12,954,000	9,281,000
February	9,279,000	4,746,000	3,759,000	3,240,000
March	8,118,000	2,761,000	743,000	44,000
April	2,688,000	2,662,000	395,000	3,665,000
May	2,322,000	2,007,000	543,000	3,268,000
June	1,757,000	3,353,000	950,000	3,047,000
July	1,742,000	1,962,000	1,124,000	1,260,000
August	4,490,000	4,017,000	438,000	4,945,000
September	2,261,000	563,000	577,000	446,000
October	6,312,000	3,961,000	2,600,000	4,290,000
November	2,400,000	12,144,000	11,072,000	304,000
December	1,096,000	11,755,000	6,064,000	n a

Supermarkets

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with which supermarkets her Department has had discussions regarding policies on stocking UK-produced food. [203716]

Alun Michael: As part of the Defra funded £3 million programme of support for the quality regional food sector, Food From Britain have held discussions with Asda, Booths, Budgens, the Co-op, Londis, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Waitrose to understand their local sourcing policies and to work with them and regional food groups to get more quality regional foods listed.

In addition, as part of the work under the "Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England" my ministerial colleague, the Under-Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Bradshaw), has had meetings in the last 12 months with representatives of Tesco, Asda and Morrisons. Officials have also had regular contact with the British Retail Consortium and the Association of Convenience Stores regarding local sourcing.

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list in descending order the percentage of *(a)* pork, *(b)* bacon and *(c)* ham which (i) was British and (ii) bore the Meat and Livestock Commission's Quality Standard Mark offered for sale in supermarkets in (A) March and (B) May. [203717]

Alun Michael: The information requested is as follows:

Percentage

		(a) Pork	*(b) Bacon*	*(c) Ham*
	March			
(i)	British produced	90	43	44
(ii)	Bears quality standard mark	68	23	10
	May			
(i)	British produced	84	39	30
(ii)	Bears quality standard mark	71	24	11

However, in addition to the above figures several large supermarkets[1] currently supply 100 per cent. British fresh pork, but do not carry the Quality Standard Mark. The British Pig Executive (BPEX) is working closely with them to encourage the use of the QSM on their packaging.

[1] Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and Budgens supply 100 per cent. British fresh pork, and Morrisons supply predominantly British fresh pork.

Turkey Farms

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (1) how many cases of the liver disease blackhead have been detected in commercial turkey farms in the UK, in each of the past 10 years for which records are available; [204999]

(2) what measures her Department has taken to protect commercial turkey farmers from the liver disease blackhead. [205000]

Mr. Bradshaw: Blackhead is not a notifiable disease so it is not possible to provide an accurate figure for the number of cases. Over the past 10 years the number of incidents of blackhead in turkeys recorded on VIDA by VLA and SAC for England, Scotland and Wales between 1994 and 2003 are listed in the table:

(VIDA-Veterinary Investigation Diagnosis Analysis database. VLA-Veterinary Laboratories Agency. SAC-Scottish Agricultural College)

	Number
1994	6
1995	13
1996	7
1997	9
1998	6
1999	6
2000	6
2001	8
2002	11
2003	29
Total	101

21 incidents have been recorded on VIDA so far during 2004 from England and Wales.

In addition to the diagnoses of blackhead recorded on VIDA, other cases may be diagnosed by veterinarians in practice, without submitting material to the VLA. To obtain a better idea of the current prevalence of the disease in the industry as a whole a questionnaire has been prepared in conjunction with Defra and supplied to the British Veterinary Poultry Association (BVPA) for their members to report any cases they encounter. Veterinary colleagues in practice have also been encouraged to use the questionnaire to provide surveillance information on the disease particularly in cases where the diagnosis is not confirmed by the VLA.

Two questionnaires have been received relating to blackhead in turkeys in 2004 from flocks of 30 and 77 birds.

Information on the prevention of Blackhead in Turkeys is available on the Defra website at http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/other/blackhead.htm.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what technology her Department uses to monitor the spread of turkey manure. [203096]

Alun Michael: Defra has collected information on the land-spreading of organic manures, including turkey manure, in the 2003 British Survey of Fertiliser Practice. Information collected in the survey included rate and timing of application and the allowance made by farmers for the nutrient content of the manure.

Farmers located within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones are obliged to comply with an Action Programme of measures that includes restrictions upon the rate and timing at which organic manure can be spread. The Environment Agency is the pertinent enforcement body, and checks farm records to monitor compliance with the Action Programme.

In some cases the spreading of turkey manure may be subject to control under the Waste Framework Directive. On 9 December Defra published a consultation paper on the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005. These Regulations are necessary to repeal the current exclusion in section 75(7)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act

1990 and to apply the Directive's requirements to "agricultural waste". The consultation paper is available on the Defra website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/default.asp The application of the Directive's requirements to manure is discussed in paragraphs 3.22–3.23 of the consultation paper.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department is taking to control the spread of odour from turkey manure. [203099]

Alun Michael: From 2007 large turkey producers (those with 40,000 or more places for turkeys) will be regulated under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control regime. New installations are now regulated from the outset. Under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control regime farming installations will have to comply with the Environment Agency's Standard Farming Rules and Guidance for the poultry sector. In regards to manure spreading, turkey producers will be required to set up a manure management plan for spreading turkey manure on their own farm. Turkey producers would also be required to identify the quantity—and the nitrogen content—of manure if it is sent to another farm for land spreading.

Land spreading of organic manures in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (approximately 55 per cent. of England) must comply with the Action Programme that includes limits on nitrogen application, controls on spreading and periods when spreading cannot take place. Guidelines for farmers are published by the Department, while enforcement action is with the Environment Agency. Outside of Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, farmers are encouraged to comply with the advice in Defra's Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Air and Soil.

Where odour is a nuisance for those living in the vicinity of a farm where the spreading of turkey manure is practised, local authorities can take action under the statutory nuisance regime of section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Local authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps, where practicable, to investigate complaints of odour. If a local authority decides that an odour is prejudicial to health or a nuisance, an abatement notice must be issued, requiring that the activity causing the nuisance cease, or that 'best practicable means' be employed to reduce the level of odour. The penalty for non-compliance with an abatement notice is a fine not exceeding £20,000 upon summary conviction.

Waste

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total tonnage of waste collected has been by community recycling organisations in England in (*a*) 2000, (*b*) 2001, (*c*) 2002 and (*d*) 2003. [203663]

Mr. Morley: This information is not held centrally. The Community Recycling Network holds some information on the tonnage of waste collected by its members, but this represents only a part of the total collected by community recycling organisations.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much public money was spent on collecting and managing municipal waste in England in each year between 1997 and 2002; and how much on average it cost to collect and manage one tonne of municipal waste in the UK in each year. [203689]

Mr. Morley: The amount of public money spent on collecting and managing municipal waste in England in each year between 1997 and 2002 is set out in the table below. These figures include the amount of landfill tax paid, which does not form part of the net cost of waste management. It is not possible to separate out the proportion of landfill tax which relates to municipal waste disposal because landfill site operators make a single return to Her Majesty's Customs and Excise which covers all of their activities.

Financial year	*Amount of public money spent on collecting and managing municipal waste in England (Revenue outturn (RO6 Form)) £ million*
1997–98	1,199
1998–99	1,282
1999–2000	1,423
2000–01	1,521
2001–02	1,654
2002–03	1,807

Waste management is a devolved function. The hon. Member may wish to approach the devolved Administrations about their costs for the collection and management of one tonne of municipal waste in each year between 1997 and 2002. The information for England is given in the table.

Financial year	*Cost for collection and management of one tonne of municipal waste (Revenue Outturn (RO6 Form)) £ million*
1997–98	46.63
1998–99	48.68
1999–2000	51.78
2000–01	54.21
2001–02	57.44
2002–03	61.65

Water Charges

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to help fixed income and low paid households in the south west of England pay increased water charges. [202947]

Mr. Morley: The report of a cross-Government Review of Water Affordability was published on 2 December. In addition to a number of recommendations of general application, the report also proposed a local scale pilot scheme in the South West Water area to target water affordability assistance to lower income households. The purpose of the pilot study is to assess the combined impacts of benefits entitlement checks, water efficiency measures and metering. Defra will be discussing the details of the pilot with the water company with the aim of a start early in the next financial year.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on how many occasions his officials have had discussions with the City Treasurer of the City of Newcastle to discuss the revenue financing of the Building Schools for the Future programme; and what was agreed during such discussions. [204394]

Mr. Raynsford: There have been no formal meetings or discussions between officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the City Treasurer of the City of Newcastle to discuss the revenue financing of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have regular contact with the City Treasurer, as with other local government officers, to discuss issues on local government finance.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the scaling factors are for supporting borrowing under the Building Schools for the Future programme. [204594]

Mr. Raynsford: Borrowing by local authorities to fund investment under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme will be supported in exactly the same way as other supported borrowing. Any Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue) (SCE(R)) amount for the BSF programme will be included, together with other SCE(R) amounts, in the calculations for the Debt Charges element of the Formula Spending Share. Each element of the Formula Spending Share (FSS) calculations incorporates a scaling factor to ensure that the sum of the relevant element for all authorities is equal to the national total for that element set by central government in the Spending Review.

The overall Formula Spending Share for an authority is then used in determining how much Formula Grant support an authority will receive for all services for which the authority is responsible.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on proposals for Revenue Support Grant for 2005–06. The provisional scaling factor for the Debt Charges FSS element for 2005–06 is about 1.11. We expect to announce details of our final proposals, following consultation, towards the end of January.

Election Turnouts

Mr. Heald: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government has made of the impact on local election turnout of Electoral Commission Circular EC34/2004; and if he will make a statement. [204757]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minster has made no assessment of what impact the Electoral Commission Circular will have on local government elections turnout.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what powers local authorities have to levy council tax discounts for energy efficiency measures. [204490]

Mr. Raynsford: Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as inserted by section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003, gives local billing authorities the flexibility, if they wish, to grant reductions or exemptions on an individual basis or for a class of council tax payers.

Fireworks

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many firework-related callouts to the fire service there were in England in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2003. [204067]

Phil Hope: The number of primary fires started by fireworks, attended by the Fire and Rescue Service in England, were as follows:

	Number
2002–03	88
2003–04	172

Note:
Excludes 15 days of industrial action in 2002–03.
Source:
Fire and Rescue Service returns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Government Bodies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* regional bodies, *(b)* taskforces and *(c)* organisations that the Government have established since 1997; and which Departments have (i) established and (ii) expanded regional offices since 1997. [200140]

Phil Hope: The regional bodies, which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister contributes funds to, and that were established since 1997, are the nine regional development agencies (RDAs). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also recognises the eight voluntary regional chambers, outside London.

Information on task forces attached to central Government Departments and in existence between May 1997 and October 2000 was made available in three reports published in January, July and December 2000 on "Task Forces, Ad Hoc Advisory Groups and Reviews". For the years 2001–02 and 2003–03, this information has been included in the publications "Public Bodies 2002" and "Public Bodies 2003" respectively. Copies of these reports are available in the Library of the House.

Since 1997, more responsibilities have been given to the Government offices and they now carry out work on behalf of 10 Departments. Their current responsibilities are set out in the Regional Co-ordination Unit and Government Office Network Corporate Plan 2004–05. A copy of this has already been made available in the Library of the House.

Ministerial Conduct

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what procedures are in place within his Department to ensure that Ministers do not use public resources for political or party advantage. [204591]

Phil Hope: The Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Code make clear that public resources should not be used for Party political purposes.

MOD Land

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 346–47W, on Ministry of Defence land, what assessment he has made of *(a)* the direct benefits for English Partnerships, *(b)* the implications for the current planning systems and *(c)* the effects on local communities; what procedures are in place to audit the arrangement; which surplus sites in Hampshire will be affected by the new arrangements; and if he will make a statement. [205004]

Keith Hill: English Partnerships has an important part to play in helping to deliver the objectives of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. A key role for English Partnerships is to find and assemble land, particularly brownfield and publicly owned land, for housing development in areas of high demand. The Register of surplus public sector land provides a mechanism within which English Partnerships, or another central Government body, can express an interest in a site which is surplus to operational requirements.

The framework agreement between English Partnerships and Defence Estates announced in November simplifies the working arrangements between the organisations with regard to surplus land.

All sites identified through this process will be subject to the current planning system. Planning applications must follow the same procedure as would apply to applications for any other site and applicant. The framework agreement underpins this process and will provide an early opportunity for community engagement about the planning options for any given site.

The working arrangements agreed under the framework agreement will be monitored and reviewed as a part of English Partnerships' normal operations and the operation of the Register of surplus public sector land.

Any surplus sites in Hampshire held by central Government bodies have to be placed on the Register before they can be put on the open market. The framework agreement with Defence Estates covers sites in Hampshire that are or will become surplus to Defence requirements. It will be for English Partnerships to decide if they have an interest in any of these sites.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on the use by Liverpool city council of the powers to declare a renewal area without having published the findings of a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment; [204257]

(2) what *(a)* entitlements are conferred and *(b)* obligations are imposed by the notice recently published by Liverpool city council of a renewal area in the Kensington New Deal and Elm Park areas. [204260]

Keith Hill: The declaration of a Renewal Area under section 89(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as amended by the Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 is designed to provide a long term strategic framework for housing renewal assistance in that area and to act as a catalyst for wider regeneration action.

Before declaring a Renewal Area, the authority must first satisfy itself that the unsatisfactory living conditions in the area are best dealt with in this way. As part of this process the authority must consider a report which among other things considers the living conditions in the area and the authority's detailed proposals for dealing with these conditions, either by using powers in the 1989 Act or by other means.

The Secretary of State, my right. hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has issued guidance which recommends that as part of this evaluation the authority should undertake an assessment of the proposed area which is called a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment. There is no legislative requirement to publish any such assessment. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published in 2004 a revised guidance manual for Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment.

Before declaring a Renewal Area the authority is required by section 89(6) of the 1989 Act to consult with local residents in the area about the authority's detailed proposals for action contained in the report referred to above. It is also required to publicise the declaration when it has been made and to keep local residents informed during the renewal process and to notify them of any changes to the original declaration.

The declaration of a Renewal Area by a local authority confers on it additional powers. These are principally for the acquisition of land and property either by agreement or compulsorily for the improvement of the area and for the well-being of residents. Also to carry out works on land which it owns.

Full guidance on the use of Renewal Areas is set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's circular 05/2003 entitled 'Housing Renewal'.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much neighbourhood renewal funding earmarked for wards with high levels of deprivation was transferred by Liverpool city council for the establishment of a city of culture information office in Liverpool city centre. [204258]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister understands that in discussion of their priorities for neighbourhood renewal funding (NRF) for this year, the Liverpool Partnership Group decided to allocate £600,000 towards the establishment of a City of Culture information office. This will enable Liverpool's citizens, as well as visitors, to access information about City of Culture. NRF is provided to local authorities to help them and their Local Strategic Partnerships to improve services in their most deprived neighbourhoods and to narrow the gap between their most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country in particular in terms of employment, education, crime, health and housing.

Planning Delivery Grant

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether Planning Delivery Grant is ring-fenced funding. [204487]

Keith Hill: Planning Delivery Grant is not ring-fenced. Grant is awarded on the basis of previous performance, and therefore if authorities do not spend it on improving their planning services, the likelihood is that they will not receive awards at the same level in future.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Age Discrimination

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will introduce legislation against age discrimination; and if she will make a statement. [204425]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We are committed to outlawing age discrimination in employment and vocational training. We intend to introduce age legislation in 2006 which will make unjustified age discrimination in vocational training and employment, including recruitment, training, promotion and dismissal, unlawful for workers of all ages.

Business Registration (Birmingham, Hodge Hill)

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses were registered in Birmingham Hodge Hill in each of the last seven years. [204182]

Nigel Griffiths: There were 6,800 business start-ups in Birmingham local authority (for which Birmingham, Hodge Hill is a constituency) in 2003 and a further 4,200 in the first six months of 2004. Business start-up data for local authorities are not available for before 2003. Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 465,000 business start-ups in England and Wales in 2003, a 19 per cent. increase on the year before. A further 288,000 businesses started up in England and Wales in the first six months of 2004. This represents an increase of 23 per cent. on the first six months of 2003.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for Birmingham local authority (for which Birmingham, Hodge Hill is a constituency) are shown below for the period 1997 to 2003.

VAT registrations 1997 to 2003—Birmingham

	Number
1997	2,855
1998	2,760
1999	2,590
2000	2,670
2001	2,385
2002	2,385
2003	2,515

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/vatstats.php

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Business Support Initiatives

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have been helped by Business Link in each *(a)* region, *(b)* constituency and *(c)* local authority ward in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05 to date. [200547]

Nigel Griffiths: The table shows the number of businesses helped by Business Link in each region in 2003–04 and by 30 September 2004.

Businesses helped by Business Link

	2003–04	*2004 to end September*
England	435,293	259,102
North East	15,652	10,784
North West	51,357	33,474
Yorkshire and Humber	43,829	27,092
East Midlands	36,802	22,058
West Midlands	52,841	32,246
East	40,247	24,002
London	59,354	29,638
South East	88,267	47,296
South West	46,944	21,512

Coal Industry

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* operating and *(b)* investment aid has been made to collieries since 1997, broken down by colliery. [204387]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: This information can be found on the DTI website. Details of operating aid paid to each colliery are at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/coal/ukcoas/index.shtml—click on 'list of applicants'. Details of investment aid payments to date are at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/coal/invest_aid/index.shtml.

Competition Law

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what consultations her Department has undertaken with the newspaper and magazine distribution industry with regard to the proposed changes in competition law; [203401]

(2) whether she supports the block exemption initiative in relation to the proposed changes in competition law affecting newspaper and magazine distribution. [203402]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Over the course of the past 18 months, DTI Ministers and officials have had discussions with all sides of the newspaper and magazine industry about how removing the Order exempting vertical agreements from prohibition under UK competition law would affect arrangements for distribution of newspapers and magazines. The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is now engaged in discussions with representatives from all sides

of the newspaper and magazine industry to ensure the arrangements in place for the distribution of newspapers and magazines will continue to comply fully with domestic and European competition law after 1 May 2005 when this change will come into effect. In the context of these discussions, I understand some parties have argued in favour of a new block exemption for exclusive distribution agreements between newspaper and magazine publishers and wholesalers. DTI Ministers expect to receive advice from OFT on progress with discussions on these matters by spring 2005 at the latest.

Departmental Computer Systems

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry at interventions have been made across Government Departments to protect computer systems against the unwitting triggering of premium rate numbers through the internet. [203209]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Premium Rate Services (PRS) are regulated by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS). Their Code of Practice is set in accordance with condition 120 of the Communications Act 2003, which stipulates that Ofcom can set conditions to control the activities of PRS providers by means of such a Code of Practice.

The Government have discussed the issue of PRS dialler scams with ICSTIS and other stakeholders on several occasions over the summer and autumn. We have encouraged ICSTIS to take urgent action to deal with the problem. We have noticed some reduction in the number of complaints in the most recent months compared with the summer, although the problem remains significant.

In the summer we asked Ofcom to review PRS regulation, and Ofcom published a report on 9 December. The main recommendations for changes fall into the following three areas.

1. Improved Enforcement

Faster and more effective ICSTIS sanctions, including the power to impose sanctions directly on telecoms companies who breach the rules, with enforceable fines to deter fraudsters.

2. Consumer Redress

More effective mechanisms for ensuring that defrauded customers can get their money back, preferably from the person or company that breached the ICSTIS Code of Practice.

3. Consumer Information

Consumers need to be better informed about the ways they can protect themselves against PRS scams. All the telecoms companies in the PRS industry should play a more proactive role in informing and educating their customers. ICSTIS should continue to play a role in advising and educating consumers about PRS scams and its budget should reflect the increased resources it will need in order to continue to perform such a role effectively.

Departmental Online Advertising

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's online advertising budget was for each year between 1997 and 2004. [200948]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is not held centrally in the form required and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the proposed EU Constitution will provide an additional legal basis for Community action in the field of services of general economic interest. [203151]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 7 December 2004]*: The proposed Constitutional Treaty would provide a legal basis for European laws defining the principles and conditions enabling services of general economic interest to fulfil their missions, without prejudice to the competence of member states, in compliance with the Constitution, to provide, to commission and to fund such services.

External Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total external spending by her Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by her Department over this period; and if she will make a statement. [202378]

Ms Hewitt: The table gives the information required for the central Department. The central Department employed PFI consultants on two projects within the Department in the years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to date.

	Financial Year	
	2003–04	*2004–05*
Total Spend (£)	1,674,000	2,099,000
Full-Time Equivalents (number)	10.3	14.4
Billed Consultancy Days (number)	2,264	2,104
Implied Average Cost (£)	163,000	209,000
Firms Used (number)	10	10

Fireworks

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firework-related *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* injuries occurred in (i) Wales and (ii) the South Wales Police Force Area in (A) 2002, (B) 2003 and (C) 2004. [204262]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There were no fatalities as a result of the use of fireworks in 2002 or 2003 in the UK.

In 2002, there were 106 injuries where patients were either detained in hospital for one night or more or transferred to another hospital for treatment. In 2003 that number was 110.

The figures for 2004 are not yet available. I expect publication in March 2005.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many households are living in fuel poverty in Coventry. [203843]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 14 December 2004]*: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Malcolm Bruce) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 78W. This sets out how the fuel poverty figures for England are produced. Figures for 2001 for each of the Government Office for the Regions: 228,000 households were deemed to be in fuel poverty in the West Midlands area in that period. This data will be updated for 2003 and published in the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy Third Annual Progress Report in 2005.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many households are deemed to be in fuel poverty, broken down by local authority area. [204630]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We are unable to provide a breakdown of the number of households in fuel poverty by local authority area.

For the most recently available figures, I refer the hon. Member to the response which I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Malcolm Bruce) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 78W. This sets out how the fuel poverty figures for England are produced, and gives figures for each Government Office Region.

Major Demonstration Project

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure there is no hiatus in funding availability between the expected ending of stream one funding under the Major Demonstration Project and the commencement of stream two funding. [204845]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 14 December 2004]*: The DTI's Major Photovoltaic (PV) Demonstration Programme consists of two streams of funding. Stream one covers small scale individual installations between 0.5kWp and 5kWp—typically home-owners, small-medium sized enterprises, public sector organisations, e.g. schools, local authorities, and voluntary organisations/community groups. Stream 2 covers medium to large-scale installations between 5kWp and 100kWp—usually group housing (social and private), commercial, industrial and public sector buildings

The DTI has listened to the calls for an extension of the Major PV Demonstration Programme to give sufficient time for the development of the proposed follow on "Low Carbon Buildings Programme" (as recommended in the Renewables Innovation Review: February 2004). On 15 September 2004 a further £6 million was announced to enable the programme to be extended for a further year until March 2006.

Nuclear Industry

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with British Energy concerning the future of the Hinckley Point B, Hunterston B, Heysham 2 and Torness nuclear plant. [204784]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My officials have regular discussions with British Energy on a range of issues affecting the company. Any decisions concerning the future of British Energy's plants are a matter for the company within the overall regulatory framework.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the negative value is of assets being transferred from British Nuclear Fuels to the Nuclear Recommissioning Authority on 1 April 2005. [204844]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 14 December 2004]*: The arrangements to transfer assts take effect on 1 April 2005 and do not amount to the transfer of assets with an overall negative value. Pending the outcome of the investigation announced by the European Commission (on 1 December) into state aid issues arising out of the establishment of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), arrangements will be put in place to ensure that no new state resources are made available to the NDA and no advantage is conferred on BNFL. These arrangements will include the transfer of BNFL's sites to the NDA and for sufficient funding for the NDA to be able to begin its operations on 1 April 2005.

Oil and Gas Supplies

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact on the *(a)* UK (i) domestic consumption and (ii) economy and the *(b)* EU (A) domestic consumption and (B) economy of supplies of oil and gas which pass through Ukraine being stopped or interrupted. [204382]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: I am watching the situation closely. Although Ukraine is a transit state for gas supplies from Russia into the EU, there is significant gas storage capacity in the EU; in the short to medium term, therefore, there should be little impact on the availability of gas to final consumers in the EU or the UK

The Ukraine is also an important transit state for oil supplies from Russia into the EU. There are no reports that these supplies have been disrupted. If, however, supplies were disrupted for a prolonged period a combination of increased production from other producers, relatively high EU industry oil stock levels, and, if necessary, the co-ordinated release of emergency oil stocks by International Energy Agency members would limit the impact on the availability of oil products to final consumers in the EU and UK. These measures would also limit the impact of any disruption on the oil price.

Premium Rate Service

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, if she will make a statement on the progress of Ofcom's review of premium rate services. [203897]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Premium Rate Services (PRS) are regulated by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS). Their Code of Practice is set in accordance with condition 120 of the Communications Act 2003, which stipulates that Ofcom can set conditions to control the activities of PRS providers by means of such a Code of Practice.

The Government have discussed the issue of PRS dialler scams with ICSTIS and other stakeholders on several occasions over the summer and autumn. We have encouraged ICSTIS to take urgent action to deal with the problem. We have noticed some reduction in the number of complaints in the most recent months compared with the summer, although the problem remains significant.

In the summer we asked Ofcom to review PRS regulation, and Ofcom published a report on 9 December. The main recommendations for changes fall into the following three areas.

1. Improved Enforcement

Faster and more effective ICSTIS sanctions, including the power to impose sanctions directly on telecoms companies who breach the rules, with enforceable fines to deter fraudsters.

2. Consumer Redress

More effective mechanisms for ensuring that defrauded customers can get their money back, preferably from the person or company that breached the ICSTIS Code of Practice.

3. Consumer Information

Consumers need to be better informed about the ways they can protect themselves against PRS scams. All the telecoms companies in the PRS industry should play a more proactive role in informing and educating their customers. ICSTIS should continue to play a role in advising and educating consumers about PRS scams and its budget should reflect the increased resources it will need in order to continue to perform such a role effectively.

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking, in addition to the work being done by Ofcom and ICSTIS, to combat abuses of premium rate services, with particular reference to internet diallers. [203898]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Ofcom's report from the review was published on 9 December. The Department's role in dealing with the internet diallers problem will be fulfilled through its representation on the steering group being set up to implement the recommendations in Ofcom's report.

Radioactive Waste

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the work of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in compiling a national inventory of radioactive waste. [199659]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) has no responsibility for, or involvement in, the compilation of the UK Radioactive Waste Inventory. This is completed jointly by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and United Kingdom Nirex plc (Nirex). However, CoRWM has compiled inventory data relevant to its assessment of options for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste, and details of this are published on its website—www.corwm.org.uk.

Renewable Energy

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in respect of the recommendations of the Royal Commission for Environmental Pollution on Biomass as a Renewable Energy Source. [204622]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government published their response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution on 15 October 2004 and have also launched the following further initiatives for assessing and developing biomass energy:

A high level, one-year study of biomass energy is being undertaken by Sir Ben Gill, assisted by John Roberts, Chief Executive of United Utilities, and Nick Hartley of Oxera Consulting. The team will help Government and the biomass industry to address barriers and optimise the contribution which biomass energy can make.

The Bio-energy Infrastructure scheme has been launched—this will provide additional support of £3.5 million for biomass supply chains.

Planning Policy Statement 22 was issued in August, setting out a positive framework for renewable energy.

An initial scoping study has been commissioned by DTI and Defra to quantify the benefits which might be gained from promoting renewable heat and the extent to which support may be required.

Cambridge University has been commissioned to provide data on the economics of energy crops by April 2005.

The Forestry Commission are commissioning a study of the environmental impacts of a wide range of species which might be used for short rotation forestry.

In addition, the Non Food Crops Strategy was published in November and advice has been issued on the linkage between Energy Crops Scheme and Entry Level Scheme (subject to Commission approval).

Royal Mail (Performance Statistics)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will introduce performance statistics for Royal Mail based on the first three letters and digits of the postcodes; and if she will make a statement. [203836]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Royal Mail is required under the terms of its licence issued by Postcomm, the postal services regulator, to measure and publish its performance against agreed licence targets.

Any additional measurement that may be undertaken to provide further detail is an operational and commercial decision for Royal Mail.

Sub-contractors

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has *(a)* to bring forward legislation to provide protection for sub-contractors from loss following a main contractor's liquidation and *(b)* to introduce civil liability for losses by sub-contractors where they have been induced or increased by the misuse of letters of comfort by the holding company of a liquidated main contractor; and if she will make a statement. [203735]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Proposals have been made by Sir Michael Latham's review group as part of the Review of Part II of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to provide protection for sub-contractors from losses following a main contractor's liquidation. These are currently being considered by my Department, which will be issuing a consultation paper early next year.

(b) There are no plans to legislate in this area.

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received in respect of the letters of comfort issued to sub-contractors immediately prior to liquidation of Ballast plc by its Dutch holding company; and if she will make a statement. [203736]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No such representations have been made. Ballast plc went into administration in October 2003 following withdrawal of support from its Dutch parent. It did not go into liquidation until October 2004.

UK Trade and Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which businesses, associations and organisations have been consulted about the changes being discussed by UK Trade and Investment as a result of the 2004 Spending Review. [203896]

Mr. Alexander: Since the results of SR2004 were announced, UK Trade and Investment has been consulting widely with its stakeholders over potential changes to the services it provides. These stakeholders include regional development agencies, devolved Administrations, business members of its advisory panels and also those trade organisations accredited to organise supported overseas trade fairs, sectoral missions and seminar groups.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what budget UK Trade and Investments has set for funding for exhibitions in 2004; and what the budget for 2005 is expected to be. [203948]

Mr. Alexander: UK Trade and Investment's SESA scheme provides funding for overseas exhibitions, sectoral missions and seminars. The budget for the scheme for the financial year ending 31 March 2005 is £20 million. The budget for the financial year ending 31 March 2006 is £16 million. The exact budget split between exhibitions, sectoral missions and seminars is not fixed in advance. Exhibitions normally account for approximately 80 per cent. of the budget.

VAT-registered Businesses (Rhondda)

Chris Bryant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, how many VAT registered enterprises there are in the constituency of the Rhondda. [204608]

Nigel Griffiths: Barclays data show that there were 1,900 business start-ups in the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff local authority (for which Rhondda is a constituency) and Merthyr Tydfil local authority combined in 2003. There were a further 900 in Rhondda, Cynon and Taff local authority in the first six months of 2004. Business start-up data for local authorities are not available for before 2003.

Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 465,000 business start-ups in England and Wales in 2003, a 19 per cent. increase on the year before. A further 288,000 business started up in England and Wales in the first six months of 2004. This represents an increase of 23 per cent. on the first six months of 2003.

DTI figures based solely on the stock of businesses registered for VAT show that there were 3,725 businesses registered fro VAT in Rhondda, Cynon and Taff local authority (for which Rhondda is a constituency) at the start of 2004. There were 365 new VAT registrations in Rhondda, Cynon and Taff in 2003[1].

VAT stocks do not capture all business activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Only 1.8 million out of four million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Source:

[1] Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT registrations and de-registrations 1994/2003, Small Business Service. www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/vatstats.php

Wind Farms

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effects of wind farms on tourism. [201328]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: While my Department has not made any specific assessment of the effects of wind farms on tourism, I am aware of a number of other assessments. From these there is no evidence to suggest that wind farms deter tourists, indeed some wind farms are themselves tourist attractions. For example, the UK's first commercial wind farm in Cornwall received 350,000 visitors in its first eight years of operation. In Swaffham, Norfolk, tourists queue to climb the wind turbine tower to the viewing platform at the top. In Scotland, a Mori poll was undertaken in 2002 regarding wind farms in the Argyll area. 80 per cent. of tourists said they would be interested in visiting a wind farm if it were open to the public with a visitor centre.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Battle of Trafalgar Commemorations

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what preparations are being made to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar. [205028]

Estelle Morris: The bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar is the inspiration for SeaBritain 2005, a national celebration of Britain's maritime heritage and links with the sea. SeaBritain 2005 is an initiative led by the National Maritime Museum, in partnership with many leading national and regional bodies, including VisitBritain, the Official Nelson Commemorations Committee, the Royal Navy and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

At the heart of SeaBritain 2005 is the Trafalgar Festival, with events throughout summer and autumn 2005 to mark the bicentenary. Highlights will include an International Fleet Review, Son et Lumière and firework display at Spithead in the Solent, an International Drumhead Ceremony on Southsea Common and an International Festival of the Sea at HM Naval Base Portsmouth, recreations of the delivery of Vice-Admiral Collingwood's Trafalgar Dispatch to London and Nelson's waterborne funeral procession from Greenwich to Whitehall, and commemorative tree-plantings for schools in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The climax of the Festival will be the Trafalgar Weekend of 21–23 October, with a commemorative dinner in HMS Victory on 21 October, a musical celebration of the Sea and the Battle of Trafalgar at the Royal Albert Hall on 22 October, and on 23 October, the Sea Cadets' parade in Trafalgar Square and services of commemoration at St Paul's Cathedral, where Nelson is buried, and St Nicholas's Church, Great Yarmouth, where he worshipped in 1801 on his return from the Battle of Copenhagen.

The Trafalgar Festival will emphasise the involvement of young people, demonstrating to them the continuing importance of the sea to Britain and the richness of our maritime heritage. SeaBritain 2005 will encourage all to take part in the Festival or to develop their own events under its umbrella, with the aim of leaving a legacy that will stimulate interest in the sea and inland waters. Full details of all events planned as part of SeaBritain 2005, including the Trafalgar Festival, can be found on the SeaBritain website at www.SeaBritain2005.com. Details of the Navy Board's Trafalgar 200 events can be found at www.trafalgar200.com.

BBC

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of the BBC's budget during the last four financial years came from *(a)* licence fee, *(b)* Government funding, *(c)* income from commercial enterprise and *(d)* other sources. [203727]

Estelle Morris: According to the BBC's Annual Report and Accounts, the following table shows what percentage of the BBC group's external income came from the licence fee, Government funding, income from commercial enterprises and other sources.

	Total Group external income (£ million) [1]	*Licence fee (percentage)*	*Government funding*[2] *(percentage)*	*Commercial services (percentage)*	*Other (percentage)*
2001	3,164.5	74.9	5.7	17.5	1.8
2002	3,382.9	74.8	5.6	17.9	1.7
2003	3,532.0	75.3	5.7	17.7	1.3
2004	3,705.9	75.5	6.0	17.4	1.1

[1] Includes contribution from Department for Work and Pensions for free television licence fee for over-75s: 2001—£307.7 million, 2002—£350.0 million, 2003—£370.9 million, 2004—£407.8 million
[2] World Service

Creative Partnerships/Culture Online

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people are employed by *(a)* Creative Partnerships and *(b)* Culture Online; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of each body. [203755]

Estelle Morris: The information is set out in the following table.

	People currently employed	*Running costs 2003–04 (£)*
Creative Partnerships	116	4,521,000
Culture Online	[1]11.2	778,000

[1] Full-time equivalent (excluding three on maternity leave)

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many cases have been brought against her Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202345]

Mr. Caborn: There have been two cases involving the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport founded wholly or chiefly on a claim for breach of the Human Rights Act 1998, one of which included the Secretary of State as a defendant and one as an interested party. One case was dismissed, the other withdrawn by consent. The total legal fees incurred were £14,167.30 including VAT.

My Department's investigations have revealed one other case involving the Secretary of State where a claim for breach of the Human Rights Act 1998 was made but only in support of other causes of action. The legal fees incurred were £8,305.27 including VAT but it is not possible to apportion them between the different causes of action.

Family Planning Booklet

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether lottery funding was used in the publication of the Family Planning Association booklet, Girls Out Loud. [204397]

Estelle Morris: The Family Planning Association was awarded £55,000 by the community fund to produce educational materials to enable young women to make more informed decisions about their personal and sexual lives. Girls Out Loud consists of a video, and a handbook funded by the lottery grant and a further booklet called 4 Girls, which was originally paid for by the Department of Health, although this is now self-funding.

Staff Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204375]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has one on site gym available to staff. The facility has recently been upgraded and the YMCA now manages the gym with members also benefiting from free access to the Central YMCA gym. The gym is funded through membership fees and the Department will meet the annual management fee of £60 per year per member. No figures will be available until the end of the first year's operation.

Park Refurbishment (Liverpool)

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much grant has been paid to Liverpool city council by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the refurbishment of the Victorian parks at Sefton, Newsham, Stanley and Botanic since 1997. [203646]

Mr. Caborn: Since 1997, the Heritage Lottery Fund has made one award to parks in Liverpool. The award of £2,442,000 was made in 1998 to Liverpool city council for the restoration of the Grade II* listed Palm House in Sefton Park.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Contracted Professional Services

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost to his Department was of contracted professional services in each of the last five years. [201679]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [200824]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: For the financial year 2002–03 I refer the hon. Member to the response given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 397–98W and the letter that was deposited in the Library in relation to this response.

For the financial year 2003–04 my hon. Friend the Minister of the Cabinet Office has asked Nick Matheson, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the cost of Ministerial vehicles provided to this Department in 2003–04.

The costs of taxis could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

School Sport

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what funding has been allocated to sport in secondary schools for 2005–06 to develop potential medal winners for the 2012 Olympic games; [204389]

(2) what investment was made in secondary schools in advance of the 2004 Athens Olympics aimed at increasing the UK medal total; [204484]

(3) what investment into secondary schools is planned for 2005 with the intention of producing medal winners at the 2016 Olympic Games. [204485]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* As part of the national strategy for PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL), we are investing some £2 million per year into the development and support of very talented children and young people. This funding—which benefits pupils in primary and secondary schools—began in 2003–04 and will continue until at least 2007–08. It is part of the overall expenditure on the wider PESSCL programme of £459 million to 2006 to ensure that at least 75 per cent. of 5 to 16-year-olds have at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport a week. This target extends to 85 per cent. by 2008. An additional £686 million is being invested to improve school sports facilities across England. We will be announcing total funding for the next phase of PESSCL shortly.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rwanda

6. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development what recent assistance he has given to Rwanda. [204701]

Hilary Benn: DFID's assistance to Rwanda is helping the Government implement its Poverty Reduction Plan. Our commitment to Rwanda is £42 million for 2004–05 (two thirds is Poverty Reduction Budget Support). So far this financial year, we have spent £26.25 million, of which £20.25 million is Poverty Reduction Budget Support. Our commitment rises to £46 million for 2005–06.

11. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Rwanda; and what assistance his Department is giving to address it. [204707]

Mr. Thomas: The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Rwanda is estimated at 5.1 per cent.[1] A comprehensive national plan has been developed that aims to provide anti-retroviral therapies to all Rwandans by 2010.

We have committed £8,700,000 to HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, focusing on capacity building and provision of anti-retroviral therapies. UK assistance is provided to the national co-ordinating body, UNAIDS, and the Ministry of Education, for anti-retroviral therapies to genocide survivors and for nationwide reduction and prevention activities.

[1] *Source:*
UNAIDS

Palestinian Security Forces

7. **Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the Government are giving to, and what progress has been made with, the reform of Palestinian security forces. [204702]

Hilary Benn: The Government are working closely with the Palestinian Authority on security reform. We have helped set up operations rooms to co-ordinate security work and are providing both technical assistance and equipment.

DFID is funding a police officer to help the Palestinian Authority reform the civil policing structures. We are also supporting a Central Intervention Force to provide security during the forthcoming election period. Progress is being made, but more could be done under the transitional government.

Northern Uganda

8. **Valerie Davey:** To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the humanitarian situation following the recent ceasefire in Northern Uganda. [204703]

Hilary Benn: The recent announcement of a ceasefire in part of northern Uganda and contact between a mediator and LRA commanders is welcome news. This has resulted in a reduction in violence in the north. As a result, humanitarian agencies are achieving greater access to the 1.6 million displaced people.

The humanitarian situation is an emergency, but overall mortality and malnutrition rates suggest it is currently under control. Sustained improvements remain critically dependent on the conflict being resolved. We are, therefore, doing what we can to support peace efforts, as well as providing substantial humanitarian support, including a further contribution of £2 million to the World Food Programme agreed earlier this month.

Africa (Aid)

9. **David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development what plans he has for food aid to Africa. [204704]

Hilary Benn: DFID is in the process of assessing emergency food-aid needs in Africa for 2005. Most of DFID's food-aid support is channelled through the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

DFID has been the fourth largest donor to WFP this year, with a commitment of nearly £50 million, of which 90 per cent. is targeted to Africa. DFID's contribution to emergency food aid needs for 2005 is likely to be comparable to 2004, should the humanitarian need remain proportional to 2004.

Possible recipients of DFID food-aid support in 2005 include: Chad, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Liberia, and Mauritania.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

10. **Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [204705]

Hilary Benn: Since the establishment of the transitional Government, we have expanded our bilateral development programme in DRC, which stands at £34 million this year. On top of humanitarian assistance, our support is focused on four main areas, as long as the peace process remains on track:

the establishment of basic security and rule of law;

the establishment of a functioning state;

the reconstruction of the country and the fight against HIV/AIDS;

the transparent management of natural resources.

We will also be supporting these areas, and others, through our contributions to the European Union, the World Bank and the United Nations.

Balkans

12. **Mr. Chidgey:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on donor co-ordination in the Balkans. [204708]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The large volumes of development assistance that have been and continue to be provided in the Balkans have not been well co-ordinated, either by donors or governments. The region lags behind international best practice on donor harmonisation. However, some progress is now being made and the UK is making an important contribution to improving the effectiveness of aid in the region. In Albania, Bosnia and Serbia, we are helping to strengthen the governments' ability to manage external assistance. We are also promoting better donor co-ordination within the international community to ensure that development assistance provided for poverty reduction is well co-ordinated with support provided for European integration.

Commonwealth Development Corporation

14. **Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many new investments have been made by CDC in the past 12 months; and what percentage by value were made in sub-Saharan Africa. [204710]

Hilary Benn: CDC funds were invested in 34 new investments, of which 53 per cent. by value were in sub-Saharan Africa.

Eritrea

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the predicted number of people depending on food aid in 2005 in Eritrea; and if he will make a statement. [204152]

Hilary Benn: The UN Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for 2005 estimates that 2.2 million people are in need of emergency food aid assistance. Initial feedback from the recent Food and Agriculture Organisation and World Food Programme Crop Assessment Mission to Eritrea is that the harvest for 2004 is likely to be similar or slightly less than last year. Last year's harvest was only 45 per cent. of the average harvest for the previous five years. The UN CAP is for $158 million, of which, $144 million is specifically for food aid.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the current stores of food aid *(a)* situated in and *(b)* readily available to organisations distributing aid in Eritrea; what estimate he has made of the adequacy of these stores to meet food aid requirements for 2005; and if he will make a statement. [204153]

Hilary Benn: Current stores of food aid in Eritrea amount to 149,000 mt. 102,000 mt is held by the Government of Eritrea which includes donations from bilateral donors—US, Japan and the EU, the remaining 47,000 mt has been donated by the World Food Programme (WFP). The UN Consolidated Appeal identifies a national food deficit for 2005 of 505,000 mt and of this, 384,000 mt is required in the form of emergency food assistance. Eritrea has a good road network, but fuel shortages are currently limiting the distribution capacity of a number of organisations.

DFID contributed £1 million to the WFP food aid operations in Eritrea in 2004. Sufficient food aid is available for operations in the first part of 2005; further contributions may be required later in the year. DFID stands ready to provide further assistance if this is required in the coming year.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what projects his Department has *(a)* funded and *(b)* managed in conjunction with the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission since 1998; and if he will make a statement. [204154]

Hilary Benn: DFID has no history of direct funding support for or managing projects in conjunction with Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC). DFID addresses the same aims and needs as identified by ERREC through supporting international NGOs with whom we have a track record and whom we believe can deliver effectively. NGOs in Eritrea work closely with ERREC.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proposals his Department has *(a)* made and *(b)* implemented since 1997 for projects aimed at the (i) minimisation and (ii) halting of soil erosion in Eritrea; and if he will make a statement. [204155]

Hilary Benn: DFID has funded several local NGO projects through its Small Grant Scheme for Eritrea which is managed by the British embassy in Asmara. Projects have focused on tree planting, water conservation management, and improving the efficiency of Mogodo (wood burning) stoves. No larger scale programmes are currently envisaged as DFID's programme budget for Eritrea is used to support emergency humanitarian assistance based on need.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* UK representatives have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the (A) US Administration and (B) Italian government since 1998 regarding (1) food aid, (2) development and (3) debt relief to Eritrea; and if he will make a statement. [204156]

Hilary Benn: Discussions with members of the US administration and the Italian Government have been held during donor group meetings in Asmara and with EC wide groups regarding humanitarian and development assistance. There have been no separate bilateral discussions. The UK has not had any discussions over the issue of debt relief. Eritrea does not qualified as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) under the original level of indebtedness criterion and has not come to the Paris Club for a treatment of its debts.

Ottawa Convention on Landmines

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contribution in terms of *(a)* speakers and *(b)* resources his Department made to the International Conference reviewing the 1997 Ottawa Convention on Landmines held in December in Nairobi; and if he will place in the Library the final declaration of the Review Conference. [204326]

Hilary Benn: The Review Conference for the Mine Ban Treaty recently held in Nairobi was attended by a UK delegation comprising of officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence. The Head of the UK Delegation, Mr. John Freeman, the UK Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva gave the UK statement.

The cost to the UK of supporting the arrangements for the conference is based on our assessed contributions to the United Nations and amounted to approximately £19,500.

DFID also contributed to the costs of bringing delegates from poorer mine affected countries via our financial support to the sponsorship scheme which was set up under the Convention to assist these countries. Over the past 12 months DFID has provided £16,660 to this scheme.

A copy of the final Declaration will be lodged in Parliament when it has been formally agreed.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202552]

Hilary Benn: DFID aims to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their Named Day question on the named day and endeavour to answer Ordinary Written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but DFID makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

We are unable to give accurate figures on how many Parliamentary Questions did not meet the deadline for the years asked without incurring disproportionate cost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201425]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201450]

Hilary Benn: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

DFID special advisers have not given any attributable articles or contributions to newspapers, journals, books or any other media between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

Sudan

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in Sudan. [204706]

Hilary Benn: After 23 years of conflict the UN social indicators in Sudan continue to be among the lowest in the world. With four million displaced people, large areas of the country continue to need life-saving and life-sustaining assistance. Continuing conflict has accounted for persistently high levels of poverty, as agricultural production is disrupted and people are displaced. The UN has appealed for $1.48 billion to meet needs in Sudan in 2005.

In Darfur the humanitarian situation remains precarious. Over 1.8 million have been displaced and on-going insecurity hampers delivery of humanitarian assistance. Since September 2004 the UK allocated £62.5 million to Darfur.

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on humanitarian aid being provided in the Darfur region of Sudan. [204709]

Hilary Benn: The 2004 UN appeal for Darfur is $368 million. The UK is the second biggest bilateral donor to this. Since September 2003 we have allocated £62.5 million in response to the crisis. We are channelling funds through the UN, Red Cross and NGOs. We also provide 19 per cent. of the EC's assistance—of which the total for Darfur so far is €125 million.

We will sustain our commitment to meeting humanitarian needs across Sudan through the allocation of £100 million next year. Our aim is to consolidate the humanitarian response by improving the quality of service delivery and expanding operations into remote areas.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Regional Government

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what *(a)* polling, *(b)* focus group research and *(c)* other measures of public opinion were undertaken by the Electoral Commission since June 2003 in relation to (i) the regional referendum in the North East and (ii) preparation for the referendums in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. [204588]

Mr. Viggers: I am advised by the Electoral Commission that it has used polling, focus groups and other public opinion research in fulfilling a number of its statutory duties in relation to regional referendums.

To assist the Commission in fulfilling its statutory duty to comment on the proposed local government referendum questions, interviews were conducted with members of the public across the three regions to gauge public reaction to the local government referendum questions and the draft ballot pack.

As part of the Commission's statutory role in encouraging voting at the referendums, the Commission organised focus groups across the three regions to help design its public information campaign. This work was carried out before the postponement of the referendums in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. For the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the Commission's advertising campaign, an initial public opinion survey was undertaken across the three regions in June. The second and third waves of interviews in conjunction with this evaluation, held in September and November, took place in the North East only.

To inform its statutory report on the North East referendum, now expected to be published by the autumn of 2005, the Commission is currently working in collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Council on a public opinion survey in that region; it is also arranging focus groups and other interviews.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the total cost was of the activities

performed by the Electoral Commission in connection with (*a*) the regional referendum in the North East and (*b*) preparation for the referendums in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. [204589]

Mr. Viggers: I am advised by the Electoral Commission that it is difficult to make a definitive assessment of the cost of activities performed in preparation for the postponed referendums in the North West and in Yorkshire and the Humber separately from those in preparation for the referendum in the North East.

Total Commission expenditure in relation to these referendums is expected to be £4.07 million. Of this, approximately £470,000 was incurred before the referendums in the North West and in Yorkshire and the Humber were postponed at the end of July.

The Electoral Commission plans to include a full breakdown and analysis of expenditure in preparation for the three regional referendums, and in fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to the referendum in the North East, in its statutory report on that referendum. The Commission now expects to publish this report by the autumn of 2005.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Bins

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will introduce separate bins in offices and communal areas across the parliamentary estate for the disposal of (*a*) plastic waste and (*b*) compostable waste. [204923]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: At present the recycling of plastic waste is not a viable option for the parliamentary estate. Plastic waste is not produced in sufficient amounts to be attractive to waste contractors and recyclers, although this may change in the future. Other than garden waste, waste is not currently composted. Any waste containing a meat product requires rendering and this does not make composting a viable option for the parliamentary estate.

Energy Use

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what targets have been set for sourcing energy from renewable sources on the parliamentary estate; and if he will make a statement. [204914]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The target is to obtain at least 10 per cent. of the electricity for the parliamentary estate from renewable sources. At present 11 per cent. is so supplied.

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what measures have been taken to ensure that honourable Members and staff do not leave computers and other electrical office equipment on the parliamentary estate on or on stand-by mode overnight and during weekends and other non-working days. [204916]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Publicity issued by the Energy Savers Group encourages computer users to switch off equipment out of working hours. Agreement has been reached with the Parliamentary Communications Directorate for new computers to be set to go into hibernate mode during any long periods out of use.

Photocopying Facilities

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what measures are being taken to ensure that photocopying facilities on the parliamentary estate are not used by members or staff for either personal or party campaigning use. [204920]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The regulations, approved by the Administration Committee, state that the photocopiers provided for use by Members and staff are "intended for use in connection with Members' parliamentary duties only, and may not be used for Party political or non-parliamentary work outside Parliament." Serjeant at Arms' staff will take appropriate action if they detect any abuse, or if alleged abuse is drawn to their attention.

Water Usage

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, (1) what targets have been set on reducing water usage on the parliamentary estate; and if he will make a statement; [204917]

(2) what measures are being taken to encourage the conservation of water resources on the parliamentary estate; [204918]

(3) if he will introduce measures to improve the conservation of water resources on the parliamentary estate by upgrading washing and toilet facilities so that water is only used when necessary, and facilities do not continue to consume water automatically during weekends and other non-working days. [204919]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Commission's overall target is to reduce water usage. Urinal cisterns are fitted with detectors to prevent unnecessary automatic flushing; other cisterns have flush volume reduction devices or dual flush equipment; and improvements have been made at Portcullis House so that less water is drawn from the boreholes. The Energy Savers Group is charged with encouraging economical use of water. Water economy measures compete with energy saving investments for the annual conservation budget.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Age Prejudice

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what consultation was carried out with (*a*) those seeking employment and (*b*) those involved in advising people in finding employment within the framework of the Government's consultation, Equality and Diversity: Age Matters; and if he will make a statement. [204174]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The Government have consulted widely on age issues and proposals for legislation in two consultation exercises, including Age Matters. We received over 400 responses, including responses from a wide range of voluntary organisations and trade unions as well as individuals.

Disabled People (Scotland)

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Department is on target to 2006 to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Midlothian.[200219]

Maria Eagle: The information is only available for Great Britain.

The Public Service Agreement target, covering the period from spring 2003 to spring 2006, aims to 'increase the employment rate of disabled people and reduce the difference between their employment rate and the overall employment rate'.

On current trends we should meet this target as the employment rate of disabled people has increased steadily in recent years: from 43.4 per cent. in spring 1998 to 48.9 per cent. in spring 2003 and 50.1 per cent. in spring 2004. In the same period the employment gap fell from 29.8 per cent. (spring 1998) to 25.6 per cent. (spring 2003) to 24.6 per cent. (spring 2004).

Housing Benefit

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has further to promote the housing benefit extended payment scheme. [204468]

Mr. Pond: Giving advice and information on the support available to customers is a key part of the Jobcentre Plus personal advisers' role, this includes advice on eligibility for housing benefit extended payments. We believe that these arrangements work well, but will keep them under review.

From April 2004, the extended payment scheme was widened to include those in receipt of incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance.

Jobcentre Plus

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the time taken to process the average benefits claim at Eston Jobcentre Plus was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2002–03; [202676]

(2) how many personal advisers are allocated to *(a)* Eston Jobcentre Plus and *(b)* the other areas of Redcar constituency. [202677]

Mr. Pond: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the my hon. and learned Friend.

Letter from David Anderson to Ms Vera Baird, dated 15 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the time taken to process benefit claims at Eston Jobcentre Plus and the number of Personal Advisers allocated to Eston Jobcentre Plus and other areas of Redcar constituency not covered by Eston Jobcentre Plus. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The time taken to process a claim to benefit is shown as the Average Actual Clearance Times (AACT).

The Jobseeker's Allowance AACT information for Eston, expressed in days, is as follows:

Period	*Number of days*
2002–03	10.6
2003–04	18.1

The AACT figures for Income Support (IS) in Eston are only available as part of the Middlesbrough Site information, which is an average of the performance achieved in the 9 Jobcentre/ Jobcentre Plus service delivery sites in Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar Cleveland. This is because IS processing for all sites in the Tees Valley area is centralised in Middlesbrough.

The IS AACT information for the Middlesbrough Site, expressed in days, is as follows:

Period	*Number of days*
2002–03	8.9
2003–04	7.4

The number of Personal Advisers (PAs) allocated to the offices within the Redcar constituency are as follows:

Office	*Eston*	*Redcar*	*Loftus*	*Guisborough*
Number of PAs				
Whole-time equivalents	7.29	9.09	3	5.6
Actual staff numbers	8	10	3	6

I hope this is helpful.

National Insurance

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 43–44W, on contracted-out rebates, what his assumptions are of the number of people who are contracted out in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [201933]

Malcolm Wicks *[pursuant to his reply, 6 December 2004, Official Report, c. 377W]:* The information is in the table:

Million

Type of scheme	*Number of people contracted out in 2004–05*
Contracted-out Salary Related Scheme	7.0
Contracted-out Money Purchase Scheme Contracted-out Mixed Benefit Scheme	0.6
Appropriate Personal Pension Scheme	3.1
Total	[1]10.7

[1] Numbers do not sum to total due to rounding to the nearest hundred thousand.

Notes:

1. The estimates are based on the numbers contracted-out in 2000–01, the latest year for which information is available; they are for Great Britain and are consistent with those used by the Government Actuary to estimate the cost of the rebate for the 2004 pre-Budget report.

2. The numbers are based on those shown in the departmental publication "Second-Tier Pension Provision" published in March 2004 but exclude:
(a) data for Northern Ireland as estimates for the pre-Budget report are based on Great Britain only; and
(b) people earning below the lower earnings limit.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary Session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202551]

Maria Eagle: We aim to ensure that hon. Members receive a substantive response to their named day questions on the day named and endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but we make every effort to achieve these timescales.

The Department for Work and Pensions was formed at the start of the 2001–02 parliamentary Session. Information about our performance is in the table.

	Percentage of all questions answered within:		
Session	*5 working days*	*10 working days*	*Percentage of named day questions answered on the named day*
2001–02	26	54	53
2002–03	37	68	51
2003–04	43	74	73

Telephone Costs

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what measures he has taken to ensure the telephones in his Department are not used by staff making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers; [202187]

(2) what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their personal use relating to *(a)* domestic calls and *(b)* international calls; and if he will make a statement. [202188]

Maria Eagle: The telephone systems used in the Department for Work and Pensions are installed to standards which allow the control, or "barring" of access to a detailed list of known "non Business" numbers. For example, premium rate chat line numbers etc. This barring is also used to restrict access to international numbers to a limited number of telephones on business need. These telephones can be monitored either through the use of itemised call reports or billing information.

The allocation and monitoring of such telephone extensions is held at a local level.

My Department's policy on the use of telephones allows DWP staff to use the telephone system for local personal calls with the agreement of their manager. They may also be allowed to make long distance calls but will be expected to pay for them. This is covered in the Department's Standards of Behaviour policy.

Misuse of official telephones is normally classified as minor misconduct under the Department's disciplinary policy.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what the total cost to the Duchy was for accountancy services in each of the last two years; [202470]

(2) if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by the Duchy administration in each of the last two years. [202473]

Mr. Milburn: Expenditure on accountancy services for the last two accounting years by the Duchy of Lancaster amounted to £25,454 for 2003–04 and £22,389 for 2002–03.

Energy costs incurred by the Duchy of Lancaster administration were £8,719 for 2003–04 and £6,370 in 2002–03.

The Duchy of Lancaster is not a Government Department and as such not supported by public funds. Formal accounts are prepared annually and placed in the Library of both Houses of Parliament and I would refer the hon. Member to these.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the total cost to the Duchy was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202484]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster utilises a number of professional advisers but does not employ consultants as defined within Government guidelines.

Equal Pay

John McDonnell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the difference was between average *(a)* men's and *(b)* women's salaries at each grade, band or salary range, broken down by (i) national and (ii) London rates, in each Department at the latest date for which figures are available. [200586]

Ruth Kelly: I have today placed in the Library a table which shows the mean salary for men and women, and the difference between these, by responsibility level; National and London areas. Figures are based on 1 April 2004 Civil Service Statistics data and are grouped by Major Departments. Civil Service Statistics are available in the Library and on our website at www.civilservice.gov.uk/managementinformation/statistical information/statistics/in dex.asp

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) if she will list the attributable interviews that the Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201440]

(2) if she will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that the Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201442]

Ruth Kelly: The Cabinet Office's special advisers gave no attributable interviews to newspapers, journals, books or other media, nor did they contribute articles or make other contributions in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 Cabinet Office special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202245]

Ruth Kelly: In the financial year 2003–04, Cabinet Office Special Advisers did not make any visits overseas in an official capacity.

Within the UK Special Advisers will on occasion accompany their Ministers on official visits.

Information on such visits and their cost is not separately identifiable and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the "Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether Cabinet Office Special Advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203442]

Ruth Kelly: Special Advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether Cabinet Office Special Advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203490]

Ruth Kelly: Any speeches made by Special Advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

HEALTH

Cancer (North-west)

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress in the *(a)* diagnosis and *(b)* treatment of cancer in the North West. [201340]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The national health service is no longer divided into regions. However, we have made real progress to reorganise and rejuvenate cancer services so that we compare with the best in Europe. The NHS is delivering better treatment, more quickly, to more people than ever before and there are thousands of people alive and well who would not be without these improvements.

Since April 2001, an additional 250,000 women have been invited to be screened in England as a result of the expansion of the breast screening service to 65 to 70-year-old women. In England, 99.3 per cent. of people with suspected cancer are now seen by a specialist within two weeks of being referred by their general practitioner.

Over 1,100 of the most modern pieces of equipment to diagnose and treat cancer have been delivered to hospitals since April 2000 through central programmes, with a further 200 more in the pipeline.

Commission for Healthcare Improvement

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what additional resources are being made available to the Commission for Healthcare Improvement to reduce the length of time it is taking to obtain decisions on appeals referred to the Commission; and if he will make a statement; [202912]

(2) if, when he next meets the Chairman of the Commission for Healthcare Improvement, he will impress upon him the need to speed up decisions on healthcare reviews. [202913]

Mr. Hutton: The Healthcare Commission took on its role in handling the independent review stage of the national health service complaints process at the end of July 2004. I understand from the chairman of the Commission that, since then, it has received more requests for independent review than planned for.

The Commission will be increasing its capacity appropriately to deal with the level of referrals.

Cosmetic Surgery

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the maximum waiting time is for cosmetic surgery on the NHS; [204210]

(2) what criteria are used to decide whether *(a)* plastic and *(b)* cosmetic surgery is urgent; and if he will make a statement. [204212]

Mr. Hutton: Surgery may be carried out in the national health service to correct or treat disfigurements or deformity, or to restore form and function. Typical causes include congenital defects, trauma and cancer. This is usually termed plastic surgery. Urgency is a matter for clinical decision on a case-by-case basis. Operations carried out purely for beautification purposes with no underlying clinical need are usually termed cosmetic surgery and are not provided in the NHS.

The maximum waiting time target for all inpatient specialties, including plastic surgery, is nine months and this will fall to six months by the end of 2005.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to inform hon. Members of the cost of augmented Criminal Records Bureau checks carried out by primary care trusts on medical performers; and how many medical performers have been discovered to have failed such checks. [204072]

Mr. Hutton: The cost of carrying out enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosures on general practitioners is likely to be in the region of £1,115,000. Information is not kept centrally on the number of GPs whose criminal record might bring into question their continuance on medical performers' lists.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what documents a medical performer must show to a local primary care trust to pass the augmented Criminal Records Bureau check. [204077]

Mr. Hutton: To apply for a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check, general practitioners need to complete an application form for a disclosure. They also need to produce documents to verify their identity to the primary care trust, which countersigns the application to the CRB.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the *(a)* cost to and *(b)* time taken by primary care trusts in Somerset in ensuring that all medical performers have an augmented check. [204078]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, on whose authority the decision was taken to check that all medical performers had been cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau. [204086]

Mr. Hutton: It was under the authority of the Secretary of State that the decision was taken that all general practitioners working in the national health service should be cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Food Supplements Industry

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research he has recently *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effects of the (i) Food Supplements Directive and (ii) Traditional Herbal Medicines Directive on the British food supplements industry; and if he will make a statement; [202241]

(2) if he will seek to negotiate a derogation from *(a)* the Food Supplements Directive and *(b)* the Traditional Herbal Medicines Directive. [202792]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam, Mr. Burstow, on 6 December, *Official Report*, columns 351–2W.

A partial regulatory impact assessment on the Directive on traditional herbal medicinal products (Directive 2004/24/EC) was published by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in 2003. Work is in progress to update this assessment in the light of detailed ongoing discussions about implementation of this directive between the MHRA and the herbal forum, representing United Kingdom manufacturers' trade associations operating in the herbal sector. An aim of this discussion is to contain the regulatory burden on industry consistent with the protection of public health and compliance with the requirements of the directive.

The Directive on traditional herbal medicinal products relates only to herbal products that are classified as medicines and does not affect the regulation of food supplements. During the negotiations, the UK achieved key priorities as identified in discussions between the MHRA and stakeholders. These included the possibility, for which the UK health food sector had pressed, for simplified registration under the directive of traditional herbal medicines containing ancillary vitamins and minerals. Currently such medicines require a full marketing authorisation. Additionally, to allow companies time to adjust to the new requirements, there is a seven-year transitional period starting in April 2004 before herbal medicines that were legally on the market at that date are required to comply with the directive. We have no plans to seek derogation from the terms of this directive.

General Practitioners

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients there were for each general practitioner in Ribble Valley and Fulwood on the most recent date for which figures are available. [205072]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Average list size of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] for Preston Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT

As at 30 September 2003				*Numbers (headcount)*
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT Preston PCT	5G7	57	113,816	1,597
Preston PCT	5HD	73	144,080	1,974

[1] UPEs include general medical service unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted general practitioners and PMS salaried GPs.

Note:
Patient data has been revised from previously published figures.

Souce:
Department of Health general and personal medical services statistics

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there are per head of population in each of the primary care trusts in the Ribble Valley and Fulwood constituency. [205073]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

General medical practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)[1] for Preston primary care trust (PCT) and Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT per 100,000 weighted population—as at 30 September 2003

				Numbers (headcount)
		General medical practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)[1]	*Weighted population*	*General medical practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)[1] per 100,000 weighted population*
Preston PCT	5HD	85	140,359	60.6
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	5G7	68	117,236	58.0

[1] All practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums) include general medical service practitioners and personal medical service practitioners.

Sources:
1. Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics
2. Department of Health Populations adjusted for age and need using the GMS Non-Cash Limited component of the weighted capitation formula

Health Funding

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list *(a)* delivered and *(b)* approved publicly-funded capital projects in the health sector in East Birmingham since 2001, broken down by estimated capital value. [204186]

Dr. Ladyman: Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic Health Authority reports that the main publicly funded capital schemes for the three national health service organisations covering East Birmingham are as follows:

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Trust

	Scheme	*Amount (£000)*
2001–02	Arden Leigh medium secure unit	500
2002–03	Arden Leigh medium secure unit	11,911
2003–04	Arden Leigh medium secure unit	5,860
	George and Elizabeth wards refurbishment	1,422
	Small health in-patient facility (completed)	450
2004–05	Arden Leigh medium secure unit (completion)	800
	George and Elizabeth wards refurbishment (completion)	450

In addition, the trust has an annual capital allocation for maintenance, etc, of £2 million.

East Birmingham Primary Care Trust

	Scheme	*Amount (£000)*
2002–03	None	—
2003–04	Total capital programme includes:	1,529
	redevelopment of Stockland Green health centre	585
	upgrading of Pearl GP premises	200
2004–05	Castle Vale new health centre	3,300

The PCT came into existence in 2002–03

Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Trust (Teaching)

	Scheme	*Amount (£000)*
2001–02	Total capital programme includes:	11,768
	Medical wards development project	6,758
	Pathology modernisation	619
2000–03	Total capital programme includes:	10,960
	Yardley Green transfer	3,260
	Medical Wards Phase 2	1,220
	Renal Expansion	979
	Day Surgery Hospital	856
	Sterilisation of Instruments	779
2003–04	Total capital programme includes:	9,612
	Audiology replacement	1,308
	CAT scanner	525
2004–05	Total capital programme includes:	12,269
	Audiology replacement	1,192
	MRI scanner	868

Hospital Cleaning Audit

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the criteria assessed by patient environment action teams when devising scores for cleanliness in hospitals. [204361]

Mr. Hutton: A copy of the 2005 assessment form to be used by patient environment action teams has been placed in the Library.

The final score is determined by reference to the assessment, but involves a weighting process that places greater emphasis on those aspects relating to cleanliness on wards, toilets and bathrooms and accident emergency and other departments, such as outpatients.

Hospital Trusts (Star Rating)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the star ratings system for NHS hospital trusts. [203886]

Mr. Hutton: The independent Healthcare Commission is responsible for national health service performance ratings and has launched a consultation on proposals to introduce a new health check for the NHS. This will continue to provide an annual rating of performance of NHS trusts.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what factors are taken into account when a NHS hospital trust is being assessed under the star ratings system; and if he will make a statement. [203887]

Mr. Hutton: The independent Healthcare Commission is responsible for developing and producing the national health service performance ratings. Details of how this will be done for 2004–05 will be posted on the Healthcare Commission's website at www.healthcarecommission.org.uk later this month.

Lyme Disease

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research he is undertaking into Lyme disease and its treatment; [203881]

(2) what steps he is taking to raise awareness of Lyme disease among healthcare professionals; [203882]

(3) how many reports of Lyme disease there have been in England in each year since 1986; and if he will make a statement; [203883]

(4) what steps he is taking to improve the treatment and management of Lyme disease within the national health service. [203884]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Surveillance of Lyme disease has been in place in England and Wales since 1986, and was enhanced in 1996 to provide a more complete clinical picture.

A total of 2,199 reports of Lyme disease were received between 1986 and 2003. Around 20 per cent., of these cases are known to have been acquired abroad.

	Total reports received
1986 to 1992	227
1993 to 1996	235
1997 to 2000	803
2001	261
2002	340
2003 (provisional data)	330

Advice to doctors about the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease are readily available. Highly sensitive tests for the detection of Lyme disease are readily available and accessible across the national health service. Public health officials in areas such as the New Forest, where the risks of being bitten by an infected tick are highest, have made their local general practitioners aware of relevant symptoms.

Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics, usually doxycycline or amoxicillin and early treatment usually clears the initial rash within several days and helps to prevent the development of complications. More serious symptoms also respond to antibiotic treatment. Detailed studies have shown excellent long-term outcomes for most people who receive appropriate treatment. Guidance on the treatment of Lyme disease is available on the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) website: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/zoonoses/lyme_borreliosis/faq.htm

Workshops organised jointly by the Department of Health, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the HPA were held in 2001 and 2002 to further raise awareness of healthcare professionals. These workshops brought together leading experts on the disease.

Following the completion of eight research projects investigating aspects of Lyme disease, the latest being in 1999, the Department is not currently undertaking research into Lyme disease.

National Programme for IT

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many local contracts were cancelled following his Department's decision to make Picture Archiving and Communications Systems a core service within the National Programme for Information Technology; and at what cost. [204329]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer on 14 December 2004]*: None.

NHS Professionals

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost to date of NHS Professionals. [203062]

Mr. Hutton: NHS Professionals was initially allocated £7 million to support the start up of pilot sites. A further £24 million was invested in 2002–03 and £23.2 million in 2003–04. £26.6 million was allocated to support the establishment of the new special health authority for 2004–05.

The investment included a total of over £6.1 million during the financial years 2001–02 to 2003–04 to support the flexible careers scheme managed by NHS Professionals before the special health authority was established.

NHS Staff (Pharmaceutical Company Funding)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nursing posts in the NHS are funded by pharmaceutical companies, broken down by trust and the companies involved. [203203]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Nurse Numbers

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 559W, on nurse numbers, on what *(a)* estimates and *(b)* timescales he bases his expectation of further significant increases. [204855]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* It is for national health Service organisations to determine the number of nurses needed locally.

The number of students entering training to become a nurse or midwife has increased by 62 per cent. since 1996–97. Combined with international recruitment, return to practice and the increasing numbers of newly qualified nurses, we expect to see increases in the nursing workforce.

Out-of-hours Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what problems have been encountered by primary care trusts which have not yet been able to finalise their arrangements for out-of-hours care under the new general medical services contract; [204957]

(2) what steps he will take after the end of the year in respect of primary care trusts that have not yet finalised their arrangements for out-of-hours care under the new general medical services contract; [204958]

(3) how many primary care trusts his Department estimated would have finalised their arrangements for out-of-hours care under the new general medical services contract by the current month; [204982]

(4) how many primary care trusts *(a)* have finalised their arrangements for out-of-hours care under the new general medical services contract, *(b)* are in the process of finalising their arrangements and *(c)* have indicated that they will have problems implementing new arrangements by the end of the current year. [204983]

Mr. Hutton: Under the new primary care contracts, general practitioner practices may choose to transfer responsibility for out-of-hours services to their primary care trust (PCT), with the agreement of their PCTs. From 1 January 2005, this will become a right.

Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have responsibility for performance managing PCTs to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place and, if the transition is delayed, that appropriate action is taken to ensure a quality out-of-hours service is available.

The information requested is not collected centrally. However, unvalidated information volunteered by SHAs indicates that some 275 PCTs have finalised arrangements for out-of-hours services and that 21 are in the process of doing so, or have yet formally to commence their commissioning role. No PCTs have indicated that they will have problems implementing their new roles.

Private Finance Initiative

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many private finance initiative and public private partnership contracts with his Department have been won by subsidiaries of Halliburton in each year from 1997; what the terms were of each contract; and if he will make a statement. [205079]

Mr. Hutton: No private finance initiative or public private partnership contracts with the Department have been won by subsidiaries of Halliburton.

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what the membership is of the *(a)* Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding Stuffs, *(b)* the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes, *(c)* the Advisory Committee on Research, *(d)* the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food, *(e)* the Beef Assurance Scheme Membership Panel, *(f)* the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment, *(g)* the Consumer Committee, *(h)* the Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals and (i) the Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running cost was of each body in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203748]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The membership of the Food Standards Agency's Committees is as follows:

Membership of the Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs is:

Dr Chitra Bharucha (Chairman)
Dr Dozie Azubike
Dr Paul Brantom
Dr Ian Brown
Professor Andrew Chesson
Dr Bruce Cottrill
Professor Julie Fitzpatrick
Dr Nigel Halford
Ms Diane McCrea
Dr Helen Raine
Richard Scales
Dr Nigel Shepperson
Dr Colin Stewart
Marcus Themans

Membership of the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes is:

Professor Mike Gasson (Chairman)
Miss Jill Brand
Professor Ruth Chadwick
Dr Hilary Close
Mr Neville Craddock
Professor Phil Dale
Professor James Dunwell
Professor Gary Foster
Dr John Fowler
Dr Peter Lund
Professor Alan Malcolm
Dr Clive Meredith
Professor Ian Rowland
Professor John Warner

Dr Anthony Williams

Membership of the Advisory Committee on Research is:
Professor Michael Lean (Chairman)
Dr Paul Brantom
Professor Duncan Maskell
Professor Richard Moody
Professor William Donachie
Professor Stuart Slorach
Professor Christopher Ritson
Dr Ann Richardson
Ms Tanya Heasman
Professor Anne Murcott
Ms Diane McCrea
Professor Alastair Robertson
Dr Peter McClure

Membership of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food is:
Bill Reilly (Chairman)
Mr John Bassett
Dr David Brown
Ms Sue Davies
Professor Mike Gasson
Dr Katherine Hadley
Professor Tom Humphrey
Professor Paul Hunter
Mr Alec Kyriakides
Ms Eva Lewis
Mr Paul McMullin
Mr Philip Mepham
Professor Sarah O'Brien
Mr Brian Pierce
Mr David Piccaver
Professor Laura Piddock
Dr Quentin Sandifer
Professor Peter Williams
The Beef Assurance Scheme membership Panel was not convened during 2003–04.

Membership of the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment is:
Professor IA Hughes (Chairman)
Professor A Boobis
Dr P Carthew
Professor JK Chipman
Dr J Hinson
Dr P Jackson
Dr M Joffe
Professor J Lunec
Dr A Piersma
Professor D Ray
Professor I R Rowland
Dr L Rushton
Ms J Salfield
Dr A G Smith
Dr L Stanley
Professor S Strobel
Dr M Tucker
Miss A Ward

Membership of the Consumer Committee is:
Nancy Robson (Chair)
Alison Childs
Thomas Chan
John Godfrey
Julie Friend
Jeanette Longfield
Sinéad Furey
Emma Copeland
Sue Dibb
Lindsey Kearton
Lucy Gillie

The Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals was formally wound up in May 2003.

The Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee was formally wound up in October 2004.

Members of these committees do not receive salaries but are paid an attendance fee, a preparation fee and expenses for each meeting they attend. The costs and staff numbers are shown in the table.

Name of Committee	*Salary and expenses (£)*	*Running costs (£)*	*Number of staff*
Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding Stuffs	28,000	17,000	6
Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes	18,500	35,500	Departmental staff service this body alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately
Advisory Committee on Research	10,000	8,000	Departmental staff service this body alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately
Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food	20,504	24,730	3.5
Beef Assurance Scheme Membership Panel	0	0	0
Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment	30,000	80,000	Departmental staff service this body alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately
Consumer Committee	10,246	20,270	Departmental staff service this body alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately
Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals	0	26,000	Departmental staff service this body alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately

Name of Committee	Salary and expenses (£)[1]	Running costs (£)	Number of staff
Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee	9,177	25,875	Departmental staff service this body alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately

[1] All figures are for 2003–04 except the Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals, which is for 2002–03.
[2] Collated from total costs of £78,000 for three years (includes fees and expenses)

Water Fluoridation

Matthew Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which water companies put fluoride in the water they supply. [199953]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Strategic health authorities have agreements with the following water companies to supply water, to which fluoride has been added, to areas for which they are responsible: Anglian Water Services Ltd., Northumbrian Water Ltd., South Staffordshire Water plc, Severn Trent plc and United Utilities Water plc.

In addition, Northumbrian Water Ltd., Yorkshire Water Services Ltd. and Thames Water Utilities Ltd. supply water, in which fluoride occurs naturally, to some areas at levels approaching one part per million. This is the level at which water is artificially fluoridated.

DEFENCE

Army Training

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations the Adjutant General has made to him on *(a)* the funding of and *(b)* the number of instructors available in the Army training camps. [202266]

Mr. Caplin: In 2003, as part of the Ministry of Defence's Short Term Planning (STP) process, an additional 192 military personnel were required to improve recruit supervisory care ratios within Army training establishments. So far, 181 personnel have been found from the Field Army, and AG Command has been provided with the necessary funds to support them until 2006.

Butler Review

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action has been taken to address the recommendation in paragraph 589 of Lord Butler's Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction concerning the provision of channels for the expression of dissent within the Defence Intelligence Service; and if he will make a statement. [205016]

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what action has been taken to address the recommendation in paragraph 587 of Lord Butler's Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction concerning the integration of relevant work of the Defence Intelligence Service with the rest of the intelligence community; and if he will make a statement; [205012]

(2) what action has been taken to address the recommendation in paragraph 590 of Lord Butler's Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction that the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff should generally be an intelligence specialist; and if he will make a statement. [205011]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* I refer the hon. Members to the written ministerial statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 54WS.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201693]

Mr. Caplin: In line with our policy on using wider interest publications for recruitment advertising, the Ministry of Defence regularly places advertisements in a number of ethnic publications, including Muslim newspapers. Muslim publications in which advertisements are currently placed are:

Muslim Weekly
Muslim News
Bangla Post
Asian Leader
Aatish
Citizen (based in Burnley)
Pakistani Community Magazine (London based)
Ataish
Eid Magazine
Eastern Eye.

Departmental Telephones

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their personal use relating to *(a)* domestic calls and *(b)* international calls; and if he will make a statement. [201109]

Mr. Caplin: The private use of official telephone facilities for incoming and outgoing calls (including voice, data or fax) is not permitted and personnel making unauthorised private calls may be liable for disciplinary action.

Where the caller uses a chargecard, private calls on official telephone facilities are permissible, provided that they are kept to a minimum and do not interfere with official business.

Personal calls may be made from an official telephone, at no cost to the individual, in cases of genuine emergency or where calls are of a compassionate nature with agreement from the line manager.

Iraq

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his oral statement of 24 November

2004, *Official Report*, column 108W, on Iraq, when the Iraqi Interim Government decided on the method of election for the forthcoming elections. [202975]

Mr. Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

The Iraqi Governing Council adopted a resolution in support of the Single National District Proportional Representation system on 30 May 2004.

Medals

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the value *(a)* to collectors and *(b)* as scrap of specimen medals, unissued medals and medal clasps held at Droitwich which are surplus to requirements; what plans he has to dispose of such stocks; if he will dispose of them by (i) auction and (ii) competitive tender; what assessment he has made of the rarity of the items; if he will list the stocks held of each of these items dating to wars and campaigns before 1939; and if he will make a statement. [199424]

Mr. Caplin: No medals will be offered for sale.

The Army Medal Office retains a limited amount of named medals and clasps, which were issued but have been returned for various reasons. These medals have a commercial value, but it would not be appropriate to seek to exploit this through the open market. They will instead be offered to Regimental Museums.

Stocks of unengraved medals and clasps held by the Army Medal Office which are not required by the new MOD Medal Office will be returned to the Royal Mint for destruction and the value of the bullion will be recovered to the Exchequer. Unengraved medals and clasps have no commercial value.

A detailed list of surplus stock of items dating before 1939 is currently being compiled. I will write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which representatives of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment he met on the morning of 29 November. [201573]

Mr. Hoon: I met Parmjit Dhanda MP and Diana Organ MP at their request, together with a delegation from Gloucestershire concerned about the potential impact of the restructuring of the infantry on the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment.

VE and VJ Days

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of consultation letters sent, and replies received, on the date of celebration of the 60th anniversaries of VE and VJ days; and if he will make a statement on the process leading to the choice of a single date. [202701]

Mr. Caplin: VE Day and VJ Day ceremonies at the cenotaph in London will be held on Sunday 8 May and Sunday 21 August respectively.

Informal consultation took place with the appropriate Veterans organisations prior to my announcement of these ceremonies on 27 September.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [200769]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Department's commitment not to discriminate unfairly on any grounds is set out clearly in our equal opportunities policy which is currently being revised to make an explicit reference to age. The Home Office Five Year Race and Diversity Programme includes work to meet the requirements of the proposed regulations on age discrimination in time for implementation in December 2006. This includes monitoring age in all our HR processes. This work will be informed by the latest developments on age policy which we follow through our membership of the Employers Forum on Age (EFA). We have also recently established a new staff Focus Group on age. The Home Office is currently developing diversity awareness training for all staff. This will include guidance on age discrimination and a series of booklets on dignity at work will also give examples on how to avoid age discrimination in the workplace. At present, most staff in the Home Office below the Senior Civil Service have the right to request to remain after the 'normal' retirement age of 60, up to the age of 65. Their being able to stay is dependent on the quality of their work and their health.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date the Animal Procedures Committee was informed that Imutran primates on moderate procedures had been found dead; and what form the communication took. [199892]

Caroline Flint: The specific information requested is not readily identifiable from Home Office records.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) have been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* granted by the courts in Gloucestershire, broken down by local authority area, in each year that ASBOs have been in effect. [202657]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the following table.

The number of ASBO applications, by result, and the number given on conviction, as notified to the Home Office, where restrictions applied to specific local authority areas in Gloucestershire, 1 April 1999[1] to 30 June 2004

	ASBOs on application[2]			ASBOs on conviction	
Period/local authority area	*Total applications*	*Total refused*	*Total issued*	*Total issued*	*Total issued on application/on conviction*
1 June 2000 to 31 December 2000					
Cheltenham borough council	1	—	1	[3]—	1
Forest of Dean district council	1	—	1	[3]—	1
Sub-total	2	—	2	[3]—	2
1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001					
Cheltenham borough council	2	—	2	[3]—	2
Sub-total	2	—	2	[3]—	2
1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002					
Cheltenham borough council	1	—	1	—	1
Sub-total	1	—	1	—	1
1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003					
Cheltenham borough council	2	—	2	—	2
Gloucester city council	-	—	—	1	1
Stroud district council	2	—	2	—	2
Sub-total	4	—	4	1	5
1 January 2004 to 30 June 2004					
Cheltenham borough council	1	—	1	3	4
Gloucester city council	2	—	2	—	2
Tewkesbury borough council	1	—	1	—	1
Sub-total	4	—	4	3	7
Total	13	—	13	4	17

[1] From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 data were collected by police force area on aggregate numbers only. During this period no ASBOs were reported to the Home Office for Gloucestershire.
[2] Only covers applications dealt with by 30 June 2004.
[3] Not applicable.

British Citizenship

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an applicant for British citizenship serving abroad in the United Kingdom's armed forces may be disqualified in their application on the grounds of absence from the United Kingdom. [201515]

Mr. Browne: Under section 6(1) (section 6(2) if married to a British citizen) of the British Nationality Act 1981 applicants for naturalisation must meet a number of residence requirements which are detailed in schedule 1 to the Act.

The residence requirements include five years residence in the UK immediately prior to application (three years if married to a British citizen) and a mandatory requirement to have been physically present in the UK on the actual date five (or three) years prior to the date of application. There is no discretion to waive the requirement to have been physically present in the UK at the start of the five or three year qualifying period where an application is being made on the basis of residence.

These requirements have not been amended and have been applied consistently since the Act came into force on 1 January 1983.

There is scope under the Act for Crown Service overseas, on the date of application for citizenship, to act as an alternative to the residence criteria outlined above. (This is set out in schedule 1 paragraph 1(3) to the Act). However, strict criteria are applied in such cases and very few applications are granted on this basis. Examples of cases that have been approved include those where the applicant had more than 20 years Crown Service with British embassies, at pro- and vice-consul level, and the application was supported by current and previous ambassadors.

In the light of the recent review into the Home Office immigration and naturalisation policy for Gurkhas, the policy for naturalisation for all servicemen has been changed. We will, generally, no longer naturalise a member of the armed forces while they are still in service. Once discharged ex-servicemen will be able to apply for naturalisation, subject to meeting the usual residence requirements. The new policy takes account of the potential high levels of absence that ex-servicemen may have and will enable these to be waived in most cases.

Our policy on applications made solely on the basis of overseas Crown Service has not changed as a result of the review, and we will continue to apply the same strict criteria in these cases.

British Police (Iraq)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many British police officers are seconded to duty in Iraq; what their expected tour of duty is; and what arrangements have been made to cover their operational duties in the UK during their absence overseas. [202798]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: There are currently 40 serving and three retired UK civilian police officers seconded to Iraq, where they are working with the Iraqi Police Service in an advisory, training and mentoring capacity. These officers are from forces in England and Wales, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Ministry of Defence Police. The length of their deployments varies from six to 18 months.

All the serving officers are volunteers who have gone to Iraq with the consent of their chief constables, who will have been satisfied that their own operational policing requirements can be fully met during the officers' absence before agreeing to release them for overseas service.

Budd Inquiry

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will *(a)* print, *(b)* publish and *(c)* pay for the report to be produced by Sir Alan Budd on the conduct of the Home Secretary. [202633]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: Provided that Parliament is sitting, we expect the report to be printed and published by the Stationery Office under the authority of the House of Commons. The Home Office will pay for the printing of the report and for any copies it requires.

Crime Statistics

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the trends in burglary rates in Telford since 1997. [203726]

Ms Blears: Telford and Wrekin is a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area. Statistics at CDRP level have only been collected centrally since 1999–2000. The available information is for recorded offences of burglary in a dwelling and is given in the tables.

Table 1: Recorded offences of burglary in a dwelling in the Telford and Wrekin crime and disorder reduction partnership area—1999–2000 to 2001–02

Period	Number of offences
1999–2000	1,345
2000–01	1,284
2001–02	1,358

Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Recorded offences of burglary in a dwelling in the Telford and Wrekin crime and disorder reduction partnership area—2002–03 and 2003–04

Period	Number of offences
2002–03	1,250
2003–04	1,231

Note:
The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the trends in car crime in Telford since 1997. [203725]

Ms Blears: Telford and Wrekin is a crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) area. Statistics at CDRP level have only been collected centrally since 1999–2000. The available information is given in the following tables and shows that recorded offences of vehicle crime have fallen in each year since 1999–2000.

Table 1: Recorded offences of vehicle crime in the Telford and Wrekin crime and disorder reduction partnership area—1999–2000 to 2001–02

Period	Number of offences
1999–2000	2,899
2000–01	2,802
2001–02	2,404

Note:
The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Recorded offences of vehicle crime in the Telford and Wrekin crime and disorder reduction partnership area—2002–03 and 2003–04

Period	Number of offences
2002–03	2,379
2003–04	2,335

Note:
The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage change in *(a)* overall recorded crime, *(b)* recorded violent crime, *(c)* burglaries and *(d)* vehicle thefts in Bolton, North-East has been since 1997. [203376]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not available centrally.

Bolton, North-East comes within the Bolton Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area. Data at CDRP level have only been published from 1999–2000 onwards. The latest figures for six key offences for 2003–04 can be found at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/cdrptabs.pdf.

More detailed statistics at CDRP level are available for 2002–03 on the new Home Office website: http://www.crimestatistics.org.uk.

Community Safety Accreditation

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces have established Community Safety Accreditation schemes; what assessment he has made of these schemes; how many private sector employees have been accredited; and if he will make a statement. [201394]

Ms Blears: 10 police forces: Gwent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Northamptonshire, North Wales, Nottinghamshire, Surrey, South Wales and West Yorkshire, have established Community Safety Accreditation Schemes so far. Chief Constables can accredit non-police employees working in a community safety role with limited powers. Two private sector employees have been accredited, by the chief Constable of Lancashire. No formal assessment has yet been made of the effectiveness of these schemes.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 9 November from the hon. Member for Walsall, North regarding a constituent; ref. M17507/4. [203036]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 7 December 2004]*: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 14 December.

Custody Sergeants

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to include the civilianisation of custody sergeants within the civilianisation programme for custody. [202112]

Ms Blears: Clauses 111 and 112 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill currently before Parliament propose creating the post of staff custody officer. Postholders would be subject to designation under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002, requiring that the chief officer is satisfied that staff are suitable, capable and adequately trained before appointment. The staff custody officer would then be able to carry out all the function of a custody officer under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

The ability to appoint staff custody officers is part of the Work force modernisation programme. Their appointment would enable experienced, supervisory ranks to take up front-line duties.

Cyclists

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will launch a campaign in the immediate future to alert cyclists to the dangers of riding bicycles during the hours of darkness without front or rear lights being displayed; and if he will make a statement. [203633]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The Department recognises the importance of conspicuity for cyclists, especially during the hours of darkness. Casualty statistics demonstrate that children are the most at risk and therefore the Department's publicity concentrates on this group. Current campaign materials promote a range of visibility solutions including using fluorescent and reflective items and cycle lights.

Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cyclists were prosecuted for crossing red lights in the latest year for which figures are available. [202702]

Caroline Flint: There were 38 pedal cyclists proceeded against in England and Wales 2003 for the offence of neglect of traffic directions (which will include failing to stop at traffic signals).

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used by his Department to determine *(a)* on which satellite television stations advertisements on behalf of his Department or its agencies are screened and *(b)* the frequency of screenings of advertisements. [201306]

Fiona Mactaggart: All Home Office advertising campaigns are produced in partnership with leading advertising agencies, media strategy agencies and media buying agencies. All these services are procured using the expertise of the Central Office of Information (COI).

Decisions on which media to use for campaigns are based on recommendations made by the media strategy agency who will take into account the campaign objectives, the target audience, and any specific regional factors.

The media strategy agency will prepare a brief for the media buyers who will then try to secure the most effective advertising slots to match the brief at the most competitive prices. Frequency of screening will depend on a consideration of how many times an audience needs to see the message before it will achieve the desired effect. This will be a key consideration in setting the campaign budget.

Hence the Home Office drug prevention campaign FRANK which aims to remind young people of an advice line that is available to them features at mid-level of frequency on satellite channels preferred by a youth audience, whereas our acquisitive crime campaign which targets a cross-section of the general public is likely to be seen on prime time terrestrial television and popular satellite channels in a number of high frequency bursts of advertising.

Media strategies and media buying are regularly audited by the COI to assess both quality of and cost effectiveness of performance

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [200759]

Fiona Mactaggart: Figures for costs alone can be misleading if not placed within the wider context of unit price changes, areas occupied and changes in actual consumption. Table 1 shows energy costs for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04, along with the corresponding

consumption data and average fuel prices. Figures are given separately for electricity and heating fuels, as well as for total energy.

Table 1: Energy costs, consumption and average prices

			Costs (£k/y)
	2002-03	*2003-04*	*Percentage change*
Total HO			
Electricity	15,054	16,598	10
Heating Fuels	17,139	19,522	14
Total Energy	32,193	36,120	12
Consumption (TkWh/y)			
Electricity	344,978	370,519	7
Heating Fuels	1,289,101	1,087,182	−16
Total Energy	1,634,169	1,457,503	−11
Average price (p/kWh)			
Electricity.	4.36	4.48	3
Heating Fuels	1.33	1.80	35
Total Energy	1.97	2.48	26

The table relates to key sites on the estate of the Home Office and its agencies. Key sites are defined as a site which is over 1,000 sq. metres, has over 50 staff and where the Department has control over the heating and electric.

Electricity costs have risen by 10 per cent. This is in part due to a 7 per cent. increase in consumption, but also a 3 per cent. increase in average price. Heating fuel costs have risen by 14 per cent., because of a large increase in average price (35 per cent.), which more than offset a 16 per cent. drop in consumption.

Total energy costs have gone up by 12 per cent. due to a 26 per cent. increase in average price. This price increase has more than offset an 11 per cent. drop in consumption of total energy.

Table 2: Floor area and consumption per sq. m.

Total HO	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*Percentage change*
Floor area (000 m^2)	3,815	3,776	−1
Electricity/sq. m.	97	98	1
Heating Fuel sq. m.	338	288	−15
Energy/sq. m.	428	386	−10

While Table 2 shows a small increase in electricity consumption (1 per cent.) per sq. m., there has been a significant decrease of 15 per cent. in consumption of heating fuels per sq. m. Overall, energy consumption per sq. m. has fallen by 10 per cent. resulting from continuing improvements in energy efficiency. The small rise in electricity use is judged to be due to greater efficiency in use of space resulting in higher staff occupation rates per sq. m. with consequent higher IT and air conditioning loads per sq. m.

The Department is drawing up an energy management strategy with the aim of increasing efficiency and reducing consumption. This will involve identifying those buildings which are high energy users through a benchmarking exercise and then undertaking energy surveys at those sites. Based on survey recommendations, site-specific action plans will be devised and implemented.

The contract for the management of the new headquarters site at 2 Marsham Street requires our PFI partner to operate the building at not less than 10 per cent. below the best practice benchmark contained in the Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme Energy Use in Offices Guide.

The Prison Service has an Energy Efficiency Action Plan. A benchmarking guide has been developed and the data used to help set carbon dioxide key performance indicators for each prison.

The Prison Service was the first Government Department/Agency to be accredited under the National Energy Foundation's scheme for energy efficiency and was re-accredited in 2003. It aims for reaccredidation every three years, which requires evidence of continuous progress.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years, giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [200765]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [200767]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Department currently provides 130 nursery places for children under five). These places are available to Home Office staff (including agencies) and are provided under contracted Workplace nursery arrangements where staff pay part of the cost of the place and the remainder, the subsidy, is paid by the Department direct to the nursery. The cost of the subsidy varies depending on the age of the child and location of the nursery.

The Department also provides holiday playscheme places during 13 weeks of school holidays each year. The playschemes are run at various locations for children between age 4 to 12 years. Over 330 staff have benefited from use of nurseries and playscheme at an overall cost to the Department of approximately £282,000.

In addition to these facilities the United Kingdom Passport Service, the Forensic Science Service and the Police and Information Technology Organisation run childcare voucher and allowance schemes, which provide staff with the opportunity to receive a contribution towards professional childcare fees.

The Department is planning to implement a childcare voucher scheme which will enable staff to take advantage of the new tax and revised national insurance arrangements relating to employer supported childcare from April 2005. The scheme will allow staff to choose to take part of their salary in the form of childcare vouchers and will enhance and expand the Department's current childcare provision. It will be available to all eligible staff irrespective of their work location and will provide more equitable and flexible support as the vouchers can be used to help meet the cost of any registered and approved childcare.

Provision of childcare is one of a number of policies the Home Office has in place to help staff balance their work and home life. By supporting access to childcare the Department benefits from increased recruitment and retention of staff, a more diverse work force and makes a positive contribution to the National Childcare Strategy. Information about childcare provision and flexible working policies that can help staff to better manage their childcare arrangements are available on the Home Office intranet.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [200773]

Fiona Mactaggart: The available information held by the Core Home Office (including IT and accommodation) in each of the last two years:

	£
2002	58,509,500
2003	73,762,761

The use of external consultants throughout the Home Office provides the Department with specialist knowledge, skills, capacity and technical expertise that is otherwise not available in house. This enables all units and organisations within the Department to achieve the levels of service required by the Home Office and the Government and assists in obtaining value for money.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been allocated under his Department's budget for central services for *(a)* private offices, *(b)* the central Secretariat providing support to Ministers and the Permanent Secretary, *(c)* Corporate Resources Directorate, *(d)* Planning and Finance Directorate, *(e)* Communications Directorate, *(f)* Legal Advisers Branch, *(g)* the Prisons Ombudsman's office and *(h)* HM Inspectorate of Prisons in (i) 2003–04, (ii) 2004–05 and (iii) 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [201417]

Fiona Mactaggart: With reference to the question for the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the table sets out the allocated budget for central services.

The Corporate Resource Directorate is made of the three units, which have been identified in the table, also the Private Office and Central Secretariat has been combined in line with the Home Office departmental structure.

PQ Ref	*Unit*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
(a) + *(b)*	Private Office/Central Secretariat	5,110	5,415	—
(f)	Legal Advise Branch	3,120	2,985	—
(c)	*Corporate Resource*			
	CDSD	95,793	101,352	—
	HRG	32,179	30,200	—
	Adelphi	16,000	5,500	—
(d)	Planning and Finance	8,109	6,660	—
(e)	Communications	36,396	19,395	—
	Central Services	196,707	171,507	195,000
(g)	Prisons Ombudsman's Office	1,658	3,215	3,252
(h)	HM Inspectorate of Prisons	2,605	2,843	2,668

Note:
The 2005–06 Central Services budget has not been sub-delegated, as the process is not yet complete.

Fireworks

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* warnings, *(b)* fixed penalty notices and *(c)* prosecutions there have been for breaches of Fireworks Act 2003 provisions governing use and sale of fireworks in each police authority area, grouped by region. [203397]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The latest provisional data in the following table shows that, from 1 October 2003 to 31 October 2004, 314 penalty notices for disorder have been issued and notified to the Home Office by police forces in England and Wales for offences involving fireworks. These include throwing fireworks, breaches of fireworks curfews and the illegal possession of certain categories of fireworks. These are shown by region and police force area in the table.

Data from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on defendants cautioned (including reprimands and final warnings for juveniles) and proceeded against for firework offences, England and Wales 2003, are also shown in the table.

Statistics on cautions and court proceedings for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Number of penalty notices for disorder given for offences involving fireworks from 1 October 2003 to 31 October 2004 by region and police force area—England and Wales

Region and police force area	*Number of PNDs given for firework offences*
Metropolitan police	5
North West region	
Cumbria	—
Lancashire	11
Merseyside	7
Greater Manchester	4
Cheshire	—
Total for region	22
North East region	
Northumbria	—
Durham	—
North Yorkshire	—
West Yorkshire	14
South Yorkshire	5
Humberside	2
Cleveland	1

Number of penalty notices for disorder given for offences involving fireworks from 1 October 2003 to 31 October 2004 by region and police force area—England and Wales

Region and police force area	Number of PNDs given for firework offences
Total for region	22
Midlands region	
West Midlands	9
Staffordshire	4
West Mercia	—
Warwickshire	—
Total for region	13
Eastern region	
Derbyshire	—
Nottinghamshire	1
Lincolnshire	—
Leicestershire	—
Northamptonshire	—
Cambridgeshire	2
Norfolk	1
Suffolk	—
Total for region	4
South East region	
Bedfordshire	—
Hertfordshire	—
Essex	2
Thames Valley	235
Hampshire	—
Surrey	1
Kent	1
Sussex	4
City of London	—
Total for region	243
South West region	
Devon and Cornwall	2
Avon and Somerset	—
Gloucestershire	—
Wiltshire	—
Dorset	—
Total for region	2
Welsh region	
North Wales	2
Gwent	1
South Wales	—
Dyfed-Powys	—
Total for region	3
Total England and Wales	314

Number of defendants cautioned and proceeded against at the magistrates courts for offences relating to fireworks—England and Wales, 2003[1]

	Explosives Act 1875 S.80		*Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol, etc.) Act 1985, S.2A*[1]		*Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997*	
	Throwing, casting or firing any fireworks in or into any highway, street etc. public place		*Being in possession of fireworks etc. in or when entering a designated sports ground*		*Contravention of Regulations—offences under S.12 Consumer Protection Act 1987*	
Region and police force area	*Cautioned*[2]	*Proceeded against*	*Caustioned*[2]	*Proceeded against*	*Cautioned*[2]	*Proceeded against*
Metropolitan police	—	8	2	—	—	26
North West region						
Cumbria	1	—	—	—	—	—
Lancashire	—	5	—	—	—	8
Merseyside	1	4	—	1	—	2
Greater Manchester	—	6	2	—	—	17
Cheshire	1	—	—	—	—	2
North East Region						
Northumbria	—	4	—	—	—	6
Durham	1	2	—	—	—	—
North Yorkshire	—	1	—	—	—	4
West Yorkshire	3	3	—	—	—	5
South Yorkshire	2	—	—	—	4	5
Humberside	—	1	—	—	—	11
Cleveland	2	—	—	—	—	4
Midlands Region						
West Midlands	—	1	—	1	—	26
Staffordshire	—	2	—	—	—	3
West Mercia	—	—	—	1	—	—
Warwickshire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eastern Region						
Derbyshire	1	—	—	—	—	9
Nottinghamshire	—	2	—	—	—	3
Lincolnshire	—	1	—	—	—	2
Leicestershire	—	1	—	—	—	3
Northamptonshire	—	—	—	—	—	2
Cambridgeshire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norfolk	—	1	—	—	—	4
Suffolk	—	—	—	—	—	2
South East Region						
Bedfordshire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hertfordshire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Essex	2	—	—	—	—	3
Thames Valley	—	—	—	—	—	3
Hampshire	—	1	—	—	—	2
Surrey	—	1	—	—	—	—

Number of defendants cautioned and proceeded against at the magistrates courts for offences relating to fireworks—England and Wales, 2003[1]

	Explosives Act 1875 S.80 Throwing, casting or firing any fireworks in or into any highway, street etc. public place		*Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol, etc.) Act 1985, S.2A*[1] *Being in possession of fireworks etc. in or when entering a designated sports ground*		*Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997 Contravention of Regulations—offences under S.12 Consumer Protection Act 1987*	
Region and police force area	*Cautioned*[2]	*Proceeded against*	*Caustioned*[2]	*Proceeded against*	*Cautioned*[2]	*Proceeded against*
Kent	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sussex	—	1	—	—	—	4
South West Region						
Avon and Somerset	—	—	—	—	—	2
Devon and Cornwall	—	1	—	—	—	—
Gloucestershire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wiltshire	1	—	—	—	—	6
Dorset	—	—	—	—	—	—
Welsh Region						
Gwent	1	—	—	—	—	1
North Wales	2	1	—	—	—	2
South Wales	1	1	—	—	—	3
Dyfed-Powys	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total England and Wales	19	48	4	3	4	170

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes reprimands and final warnings for juveniles.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the provisions in *(a)* the Fireworks Act 2003 and *(b)* other relevant legislation in controlling the misuse of fireworks. [203900]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

Measures introduced under the Fireworks Act 2003 and Consumer Protection Act 1987—the Fireworks Regulations 2004 and the Fireworks (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2004, respectively, were made in the summer of 2004. Additionally, two of the measures introduced by the Fireworks Regulations 2004 are set to come into force on 1 January 2005.

Given the above, it is still too early to gain an overall picture of the effectiveness of the regulations—a more complete picture will emerge after the next fireworks season of 2005.

Notwithstanding the above, early anecdotal reports from enforcers across the country indicate that the November fireworks season of 2004 has seen an improvement on last year. For example, the Fire and Rescue Service in Merseyside, where criminal damage with fireworks is a particular problem, estimate a 70 to 80 per cent. reduction in incidents of criminal damage caused in this way during the last fireworks season.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions of individuals for *(a)* selling fireworks without a licence, *(b)* selling fireworks that did not conform to British Standards BS 7114, *(c)* selling adult fireworks to individuals below the age of 18 and *(d)* storing fireworks in an unsafe manner there were in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2003 in (A) the UK, (B) Wales and (C) the South Wales Police Force area. [203901]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The number of prosecutions for *(a)*, *(b)*, *(c)* and *(d)*, where local Trading Standards Departments are the prosecuting authority, are not centrally available. However, the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (Lacors) has initiated an annual collection of data from local authorities with respect to prosecutions for the above offences. The figures for 2004 will be made available in early 2005.

With regard to *(d)*, where the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the prosecuting authority, there has been one prosecution since 2003 for unsafe storage in England. There were no prosecutions in Wales.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firework-related *(a)* fatalities, *(b)* serious injuries and *(c)* incidences of damage to property there were in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2003 in (A) the UK, (B) Wales and (C) the South Wales Police Force area. [203902]

Mr, Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

In answer to *(a)*, during 2003 there were no fatalities in the UK as a result of the use of fireworks. The statistics for the 2004 fireworks season are published annually in March—so are not yet available. However, I am not aware of any fatalities during the 2004 period.

With regard to *(b)*, during 2003 there were 110 injuries in the UK where hospital overnight treatment was required. A regional or national break down of such injuries (serious injuries) is not available. Again, with regard to the figures for 2004, a comparative figure for this period is not yet available for the UK.

Finally, a breakdown detailing the various causes of criminal damage is not centrally available.

Freedom of Information Act

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the likely costs to his Department in the first quarter of 2005 of compliance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and if he will make a statement. [201045]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The Home Office has made wide-ranging preparations for the full implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. There has been significant work undertaken both in preparation for implementation and also to ensure future resource inputs are reduced where possible. This has included improving Home Office record management systems, which could underpin the office's ability to comply promptly with the Act, and dummy requests to test processes.

After January implementation of the Act will principally involve staff who also have other duties. The effort which they devote to Freedom of Information issues in the first quarter of 2005 will depend on a range of factors, including the number of requests for information received in each area, the complexity of those requests, the ease with which it can be established whether relevant information is held, and the number of appeals lodged by dissatisfied requesters.

The cost of compliance is being met from existing resources, and there has been no requirement to identify anticipated costs or to collate them centrally. To collect the necessary information now would involve disproportionate cost, and the final part of Exemption 9 (voluminous or vexatious requests) of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information therefore applies.

Justice and Home Affairs Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the outcome was of the Justice and Home Affairs Council held on 2–3 December; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [203692]

Caroline Flint: I represented the United Kingdom at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Brussels on 2 December 2004.

A list of "A" points approved at the Council has been placed in the Library (Document 15393/04 PTS A61 and ADD/1).

Franco Frattini made his first appearance as the new JHA Commissioner, giving an overview of his priorities for the coming year. Immigration was at the forefront, with managed legal migration, integration, action to combat human trafficking and illegal immigration all emphasised as important work areas.

The Council took note of progress in negotiations on the draft Framework Decision on the European Evidence Warrant. The programme deadline set in the Hague Programme for completion by the end of 2005 was thought to be ambitious but not out of reach.

The Council reached a general approach on Articles 1–8 of the draft Council Decision on the exchange of information extracted from the criminal record and agreed that work should continue on the recitals, accompanying form and on the application of this measure to individuals to their records.

The Council debated the scope of application of the Framework Decision on the retention of communications data on the basis of two options. The first would allow individual service providers to define what they would keep; the second envisaged the creation of a common list of data to be retained by all. No conclusion was reached and the presidency therefore directed the working group to further examine the issues raised, including those relating to data protection and costs.

The presidency presented for discussion at a future date a proposal for a compromise package to break the deadlock on the Framework Decision on ship source pollution. This proposed the deletion of the second sentence of Article 4(7) dealing with the treatment of member states' flag ships as domestic vessels, with an amendment to Article 11 dealing with a future review of application of the instrument. The presidency package also proposed a Council Declaration and a Commission declaration concerning, respectively, engagement with the International Maritime Organisation on measures to combat pollution and the need for economic impact assessment of any future proposals.

Gijs de Vries, the EU Counter-Terrorism Co-ordinator, introduced documents presented to Ministers for agreement. They focused on the need for effective implementation of EU legislation and more effective co-operation between law enforcement services. The Commission underscored the importance of co-operation between member states on the terrorist threat, and focused on four areas of terrorism-related work, in particular: work on explosives; radicalisation and recruitment; dialogue with the private sector; and scientific and technological research.

I made an intervention focusing on the balance between action to tackle counter-terrorism and the need to protect the rights of the individual. I noted that this balance was at the centre of the debate around counter-terrorism both domestically and in the EU.

With regard to the Council decision on the exchange of information and co-operation concerning terrorist offences, discussion centred on the limitations of safeguards around the exchange of sensitive information. A general approach was reached on this Council Decision following some minor amendments to the recitals.

On the Council common position on the transfer of certain data to Interpol (lost or stolen passports) the presidency reached a general approach without amendment.

The presidency provided the Council with an information update on the Ministerial Integration Conference "Turning Principles into Actions" and the Ministerial Conference "Diversity and participation—the gender perspective", which I was grateful to receive.

Under any other business, the presidency noted the Council Decision on the application of parts of the provisions of the Schengen aquis to the UK would soon be ready for adoption. I strongly welcomed this.

The presidency provided further information on the draft decision of the Council providing for certain areas covered by title IV of Part Three of the Treaty Establishing the European Community to be governed by the procedure referred to in Article 251 of that treaty (i.e. the move to Qualified Majority Voting and co-decision for certain immigration measures), which it

hoped to adopt before the end of the year. The presidency took note of the UK's parliamentary scrutiny reserve.

In the margins of the JHA Council, there was a meeting between EU JHA Ministers and JHA Ministers of the Western Balkan states to discuss progress and co-operation on JHA matters.

Magic Mushroom Kits

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of magic mushroom kits that have been imported into the United Kingdom in the past 12 months. [199680]

Caroline Flint: There is no current estimate available of the number of magic mushroom kits that have been imported into the UK.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans he has to make the selling of fresh magic mushrooms a criminal offence. [199681]

Caroline Flint: We are currently examining the position and will take the necessary steps to ensure it is clear that it is unlawful to import, export, produce, supply or possess with intent to supply magic mushrooms.

Major Projects

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance the Home Office has received from the Cabinet Office on the timing of business case assessments in respect of major projects. [201401]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office has not received any guidance from the Cabinet Office on the timing of business case assessments in respect of major projects.

Murder Inquiry (Richard Watson)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what action has been taken by Sussex police consequent on their meeting with Linda Henderson and Amanda Williams-Gater on Friday 24 January 2003; and if he will make a statement; [202776]

(2) if he will make a statement on the progress of the re-investigation into the murder of Mr. Richard Watson; and by whom it is being conducted; [202777]

(3) on what grounds the Chief Constable of Sussex rejected the complaint of Mrs. Linda Henderson and declined to record it under section 69(1) of the Police Act 1996; and if he will review this decision under his powers as Home Secretary; [202778]

(4) what apology was given by Sussex police to Linda Henderson and Amanda Williams-Gater; to whom in the press it was made available; and when; [202779]

(5) whether the full report of the Metropolitan police investigation into the Sussex police investigation of the murder of Mr. Richard Watson has been published; and if he will place a copy in the Library; [202780]

(6) whether disciplinary action against the senior investigating officer responsible for the investigation into the murder of Mr. Richard Watson was considered by Sussex police following the investigation by the Metropolitan police into Sussex police's handling of the case; and if he will make a statement. [202781]

(7) when Detective Chief Inspector S. Dennis of Sussex police formally referred to the Crown Prosecution Service papers relating to the murder of Mr. Richard Watson; [202782]

(8) on what date the senior investigating police officer overseeing the inquiry into the murder of Mr. Richard Watson retired from Sussex police; and if he will make a statement; [202783]

(9) on what date Sussex police received the report of the investigation by the Metropolitan police into the conduct of the investigation by the Sussex police into the murder of Mr. Richard Watson; and if he will make a statement. [202784]

Ms Blears: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 2 December 2004 providing answers to these nine questions. I regret that responses were not provided when these questions were originally tabled in October 2004. I will arrange for a copy of my letter to be placed in the House Library.

National Probation Directorate

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* budget and *(b)* final expenditure of the National Probation Directorate was in the year 2003–04. [199958]

Paul Goggins: The budget for the National Probation directorate for 2003–04 was £196.8 million and the expenditure was £195.6 million. Figures include both resource and capital.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199646]

Fiona Mactaggart: The total number of written questions for which a substantive answer was not provided before the end of Session was 245. Of these, 171 were tabled in the five days leading up to Prorogation. The Department did provide substantive answers to 496 parliamentary questions in the four days up to Prorogation.

Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively in accordance with performance guidelines and especially before Prorogation. However this is not always possible. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Police (Stop/Account Procedures)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the average number of Stop and Account procedures undertaken by an individual police officer during an average duty period. [203512]

Ms Blears: There is no data currently held centrally on Stop and Account procedures. However, the observations of street patrols carried out for the phased implementation evaluation showed that during the 170 hours spent with officers outside the police station: a search was observed every 5.3 hours of patrol; and a recordable stop every 2.2 hours of patrol. These figures are based on patrol hours observed, and is not a per officer measure.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were stopped by the police per day on average in the last period for which figures are available. [203513]

Ms Blears: There are no data currently held centrally on numbers stopped but not searched. Following recommendation 61 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, police forces will be required to record all stops as well as searches from 1 April 2005.

Police Applicants (Diabetes)

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures have been put in place by constabularies medically to assess people with diabetes individually who apply to join the police. [201702]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* All applicants are assessed individually. A guidance note will shortly be circulated to all Force Medical Advisers setting out that applicants should be physically and mentally fit in accordance with non-diabetic standards.

In assessing the fitness for work of people with diabetes, Force Medical Advisers should obtain advice and information from the diabetologist and GP. Force Medical Advisers will also take account of the following factors:

Diabetes should be under regular (at least annual) specialist review

Diabetes should be under stable control

People should self-monitor their blood glucose

People should be well educated and motivated in diabetes self-care

There should be no disabling hypoglycaemia

There should be normal awareness of individual hypoglycaemic symptoms

There should be no advanced diabetic complications

There should be no significant cardiovascular disease

There should be no significant peripheral vascular disease

Fitness for work/suitability for employment should be reassessed annually. Assessments should be undertaken jointly by an occupational health physician and diabetes specialist

Annual assessments should be based on the above criteria

It is for the Police Occupational Physician to weigh up the individual's health status against any potential health and safety risks and to then make a recommendation to management regarding the individual's fitness for appointment as a police officer and any restrictions that need to be imposed on the duties performed by the individual on appointment.

Police Cars

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers since 1997 have been disciplined for the improper use of police motorcars. [202182]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Information concerning the number of officers that have been disciplined since 1997 for the improper use of police motorcars is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police Divisions (Places of Safety)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that each police division has access to a designated place of safety as defined by the Mental Health Act 1983. [199814]

Ms Blears: Guidance issued to Chief Police Officers in March 2004 (HOC 17/2004) on police and health service liaison includes reference to appropriate places of safety under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

The appropriate location of a place of safety was discussed at a meeting on 21 October 2004 of the cross-government group of officials established to look at police/health service issues relating to the management of potentially violent behaviour and the use of restraint.

The identification of preferred places of safety is a matter of local agreement. However, the group concluded that a place of safety should be a health facility unless there were exceptional circumstances such as extremely violent behaviour. This would be reflected in the Codes of Practice proposed under the Mental Health Bill currently being considered by Parliament. We are seeking to ensure that police stations can be used as a place of safety only as a last resort and examining the potential that if used, it would be for limited time period only before transfer to a more suitable place of safety must take place.

Police Funding

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what funding Lincolnshire Police will receive in 2004–05 under the Rural Sparsity Grant; [204790]

(2) how much funding has been made available to each police authority in England and Wales since 2000–01 under the Rural Sparsity Grant. [204798]

Ms Blears: Rural Policing Fund allocations to each police authority, including Lincolnshire, since 2000–01 are set out in the following table.

£

Police authority	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Avon and Somerset	494,892	992,875	993,718
Bedfordshire	81,390	163,540	163,555
Cambridgeshire	561,585	1,125,169	1,126,395
Cheshire	115,058	228,487	227,493
Cumbria	690,613	1,370,910	1,360,324
Derbyshire	208,347	416,190	415,196
Devon and Cornwall	1,554,673	3,114,489	3,128,806
Dorset	221,858	442,209	443,158
Durham	124,270	246,803	245,259
Dyfed Powys	1,297,570	2,588,337	2,583,979
Essex	251,315	503,710	504,105

£

Police authority	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Gloucestershire	387,093	776,548	775,749
Gwent	102,895	204,476	203,489
Hampshire	110,175	220,430	219,680
Humberside	357,640	710,250	705,395
Kent	298,863	599,342	599,700
Lancashire	32,228	64,054	63,835
Leicestershire	216,758	433,988	433,164
Lincolnshire	985,951	1,978,690	1,984,449
Norfolk	1,036,848	2,078,830	2,085,509
Northamptonshire	350,892	704,141	705,137
North Wales	770,617	1,533,723	1,530,130
North Yorkshire	1,005,224	2,013,806	2,018,359
Staffordshire	138,358	275,072	273,147
Suffolk	711,353	1,422,627	1,424,923
Surrey	5,463	11,048	11,006
Sussex	273,834	550,563	549,849
Thames Valley	629,559	1,262,860	1,261,933
Warwickshire	282,108	562,546	561,338
West Mercia	1,157,670	2,311,653	2,309,690
Wiltshire	544,900	1,092,634	1,091,530
Totals	15,000,000	30,000,000	30,000,000

£

Police authority	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Avon and Somerset	978,223	976,068	980,199
Bedfordshire	164,272	164,422	164,007
Cambridgeshire	1,098,821	1,100,922	1,113,162
Cheshire	228,073	227,069	226,308
Cumbria	1,355,658	1,348,383	1,341,709
Derbyshire	407,488	407,217	409,869
Devon and Cornwall	3,122,895	3,122,021	3,122,008
Dorset	441,478	440,274	438,864
Durham	239,908	237,725	236,779
Dyfed Powys	2,621,899	2,634,774	2,638,887
Essex	501,773	500,243	498,646
Gloucestershire	778,455	775,840	771,929
Gwent	202,360	201,534	200,454
Hampshire	219,421	219,178	218,558
Humberside	698,109	694,592	697,991
Kent	595,161	594,228	593,654
Lancashire	63,419	63,266	63,106
Leicestershire	428,056	429,309	428,346
Lincolnshire	2,032,554	2,050,437	2,057,779
Norfolk	2,076,414	2,074,784	2,071,305
Northamptonshire	712,539	716,418	715,936
North Wales	1,542,644	1,543,108	1,537,085
North Yorkshire	2,018,029	2,014,688	2,009,523
Staffordshire	270,884	269,021	267,339
Suffolk	1,407,313	1,403,051	1,405,084
Surrey	10,825	10,756	10,721
Sussex	541,847	539,777	537,875
Thames Valley	1,245,238	1,240,649	1,238,801
Warwickshire	558,987	562,273	565,193
West Mercia	2,341,925	2,344,363	2,336,615
Wiltshire	1,095,332	1,093,608	1,094,268
Totals	30,000,000	30,000,000	30,000,000

Police Numbers

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage change in full-time police officers in Bolton, North-East has been since 1997. [203375]

Ms Blears: The Bolton, North-East constituency is part of the Bolton Basic Command Unit (BCU) of the Greater Manchester Police. Information on strength at BCU level is collected annually and reflects the position at the end of March. Information on BCU strength is only available from 2002 and is collected on a full-time equivalent basis. BCU strength is set out in the following table. It is not possible to provide police numbers at constituency level.

Bolton Basic Command Unit

Year (as at 31 March)	Number of police officers	Percentage change
2002	517	—
2003	526	+1.7
2004	551	+4.8

The deployment of officers to BCUs is a matter for the Chief Constable (Michael Todd QPM) and within the Bolton BCU deployment of officers is a matter for the Divisional Commander.

Press Officers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press officers the Department has employed in each of the past five years. [201044]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* Press officers within the Home Office are employed at the Information Officer (IO) and Senior Information Officer (SIO) grades.

Press Office numbers in each of the past five years are outlined as follows:

	Number
1999–2000	16
2000–01	[1]31
2001–02	[2]35
2002–03	39
2003–04	39

[1] Expansion of the Home Office press office followed an external consultant's review of its staffing and operation in 1999 and recommended the creation of the Newsdesk so as to better meet the demands of the media. This improved efficiency from 'losing' in excess of 20 per cent. of the calls pre expansion, to a positive where from June 2003 to June 2004 91.8 per cent. of 61,070 calls received by the newsdesk were answered.

[2] The Home Office press office and the prison service press office merged in May 2001.

In 2003–04 the Press Office newsdesk answered 60,039 calls, Press Office issued 583 press notices and held 29 briefings for the media.

The £1.9 million cost for 2003–04 on Press Officers is 0.094 per cent. of the overall Home Office salary bill (£2,016,593,000—Home Office Departmental Report 2003–04).

Tetra

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the locations of Tetra base stations operational in the region covered by the Sussex Police Force. [202903]

Caroline Flint: O2 Airwave is responsible for providing the infrastructure for Airwave, the new police radio system. The positioning of base stations for Airwave is a matter for O2 Airwave to decide on, having

regard to the need to provide the coverage required by the police. Airwave base stations are listed in Ofcom's Sitefinder database which is available to the public via Ofcom's website.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has evaluated on the possible effects of Tetra mast signals on *(a)* breathalysers, *(b)* speed cameras, *(c)* lawnmowers, *(d)* computers and *(e)* pacemakers. [203116]

Caroline Flint: We have evaluated the possible effects of Tetra technology on speed cameras and breathalysers, and the Association of Chief Police Officers has re-issued its guidance to forces on the use of these devices to take into account the change to Tetra technology handsets and vehicle mounted radios. All electrical devices are required to comply with the relevant European Directives on Electromagnetic Compatibility.

Traffic Police

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many traffic police are operating in Essex; and how many there were in 1997. [204359]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* Published information on police strength by police force area is available for rank, gender and ethnicity but not by function.

Figures on police strength for March 2004 were published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin 13/04, copies of which are available in the Library or on the internet site: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html.

Vehicle Crime

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* reported thefts and *(b)* convictions for theft (i) of motor cars, (ii) of motorcycles, (iii) of motorcycle parts and (iv) from vehicles there were in each police authority in each of the last five years. [202284]

Ms Blears: Information on thefts of motorcycles and motorcycle parts is not collected separately. The available information relates to thefts of and from a vehicle and is provided in the tables.

Data from the recorded crime series relate to the number of offences recorded by the police. Data on convictions relate to the number of offenders. For this reason, the two sets of data are not comparable.

Table 3: Number of offenders found guilty at all courts for "theft of" and "theft from" a motor vehicle [1] by police force area—England and Wales 1999 to 2003

	1999		2000		2001	
Police force area	*Theft of a motor vehicle*[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*	*Theft of a motor vehicle*[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*	*Theft of a motor vehicle*[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*
Avon and Somerset	193	73	164	42	181	19
Bedfordshire	136	50	135	66	112	61
Cambridgeshire	96	42	90	43	70	60
Cheshire	120	68	104	13	88	4
Cleveland	113	53	104	38	121	43
Cumbria	56	12	64	13	49	11
Derbyshire	97	119	88	107	98	126
Devon and Cornwall	137	27	82	22	103	14
Dorset	60	79	52	67	42	44
Durham	120	21	98	21	75	14
Essex	188	111	201	134	214	124
Gloucestershire	60	62	49	44	55	64
Greater Manchester	756	102	722	77	726	89
Hampshire	229	196	201	168	219	140
Hertfordshire	102	82	91	97	90	87
Humberside	164	109	114	91	110	86
Kent	225	163	235	116	226	68
Lancashire	270	320	269	257	226	253
Leicestershire	151	134	107	140	134	117
Lincolnshire	84	14	54	13	37	6
Merseyside	283	125	273	172	300	110
Metropolitan Police[4]	1,431	619	1,392	514	1,453	510
Norfolk	75	34	77	15	49	11
Northamptonshire	88	20	83	33	66	45
Northumbria	131	113	97	84	26	77
North Yorkshire	258	257	236	213	201	182
Nottinghamshire	166	139	156	134	154	119
South Yorkshire	319	189	247	166	196	164
Staffordshire[3]	159	84	87	86	119	92
Suffolk	172	14	93	16	89	6
Surrey	59	39	51	30	60	23
Sussex	128	118	126	83	130	94
Thames Valley	165	38	228	33	252	28
Warwickshire	49	27	46	12	49	23

Table 3: Number of offenders found guilty at all courts for "theft of" and "theft from" a motor vehicle [1] by police force area—England and Wales 1999 to 2003

	1999		2000		2001	
Police force area	*Theft of a motor vehicle*[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*	*Theft of a motor vehicle*[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*	*Theft of a motor vehicle*[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*
West Mercia	142	119	150	96	116	106
West Midlands	639	233	592	216	620	169
West Yorkshire	489	388	438	333	449	339
Wiltshire	52	17	43	9	44	6
Dyfed Powys	41	10	34	24	43	21
Gwent	84	13	82	17	91	10
North Wales	97	71	84	48	78	40
South Wales	348	68	300	57	286	45
England and Wales	8,732	4,572	7,939	3,960	7,847	3,650

	2002		2003	
	Theft of a motor vehicle[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*	*Theft of a motor vehicle*[2]	*Theft from a motor vehicle*
Avon and Somerset	220	49	166	53
Bedfordshire	90	72	79	77
Cambridgeshire	99	54	102	62
Cheshire	120	8	91	16
Cleveland	175	44	132	29
Cumbria	53	18	41	16
Derbyshire	97	105	90	90
Devon and Cornwall	106	14	107	12
Dorset	43	60	39	60
Durham	66	5	63	8
Essex	241	97	240	78
Gloucestershire	62	50	62	41
Greater Manchester	529	103	508	142
Hampshire	238	149	166	148
Hertfordshire	153	87	107	87
Humberside	137	92	143	79
Kent	220	64	200	93
Lancashire	248	280	204	201
Leicestershire	144	132	119	122
Lincolnshire	48	12	50	16
Merseyside	275	116	297	141
Metropolitan Police[4]	1,504	500	1,208	458
Norfolk	47	15	33	16
Northamptonshire	40	43	66	59
Northumbria	22	38	158	194
North Yorkshire	186	197	71	52
Nottinghamshire	140	108	178	125
South Yorkshire	241	161	231	164
Staffordshire[3]	136	110	145	118
Suffolk	127	11	161	11
Surrey	41	23	63	19
Sussex	104	99	154	59
Thames Valley	222	53	192	91
Warwickshire	43	15	39	18
West Mercia	134	118	109	120
West Midlands	668	296	764	303
West Yorkshire	558	270	386	283
Wiltshire	48	7	40	11
Dyfed Powys	39	23	62	15
Gwent	93	13	91	14
North Wales	83	31	66	46
South Wales	335	55	288	36
England and Wales	8,175	3,797	7,531	3,783

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Includes the offence of 'Being carried knowing vehicle to have been taken or driven away'.

[3] Staffordshire police were only able to supply a sample of data for magistrates' courts proceedings covering one full week in each quarter of 2000. Estimates based on this sample are included in the figures, as they are considered sufficiently robust at this level of analysis.

[4] Includes City of London

Table 1: Vehicle crime offences recorded by the police 1999–2000 to 2001–02

	Theft of a vehicle			Theft from a vehicle		
Police force area and region	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Cleveland	4,402	4,536	4,797	8,628	9,130	9,454
Durham	3,605	2,951	2,712	5,521	5,096	5,086
Northumbria	10,395	8,693	7,837	15,804	13,662	12,573
North East Region	18,402	16,180	15,346	29,953	27,888	27,113
Cheshire	4,594	4,665	4,625	7,582	7,588	8,820
Cumbria	1,373	1,150	1,115	4,041	3,126	3,368
Greater Manchester	42,493	37,264	31,969	45,439	43,328	42,806
Lancashire	6,504	6,151	6,154	14,308	14,202	14,861
Merseyside	16,775	16,157	15,081	16,960	14,220	14,901
North West Region	71,739	65,387	58,944	88,330	82,464	84,756
Humberside	6,812	6,033	6,501	15,068	13,382	14,843
North Yorkshire	2,622	2,502	2,349	5,974	5,083	5,822
South Yorkshire	11,918	8,939	8,294	17,605	17,470	20,427
West Yorkshire	21,197	20,171	23,765	37,101	37,817	41,671
Yorkshire and the Humber Region	42,549	37,645	40,909	75,748	73,752	82,763
Derbyshire	5,472	4,177	3,832	12,649	11,560	12,471
Leicestershire	6,052	4,734	4,604	12,888	11,466	11,749
Lincolnshire	1,998	1,797	1,885	4,873	4,830	4,897
Northamptonshire	3,921	3,722	3,758	8,334	7,718	7,577
Nottinghamshire	7,035	7,135	7,714	17,681	18,474	20,818
East Midlands Region	24,478	21,565	21,793	56,425	54,048	57,512
Staffordshire	6,003	5,484	5,637	11,598	10,587	12,314
Warwickshire	2,519	2,246	2,118	6,102	5,184	5,899
West Mercia	4,690	4,079	3,336	11,053	9,139	9,725
West Midlands	33,230	27,753	25,385	43,801	39,594	38,239
West Midlands Region	46,442	39,562	36,476	72,554	64,504	66,177
Bedfordshire	4,531	4,114	3,873	9,911	8,478	8,852
Cambridgeshire	3,596	2,975	2,941	8,847	8,373	9,804
Essex	7,174	6,826	7,505	13,255	12,921	13,356
Hertfordshire	3,452	3,796	3,810	9,126	11,094	10,453
Norfolk	2,983	2,280	1,888	7,445	7,543	7,909
Suffolk	1,742	1,765	1,693	4,759	4,526	5,222
Eastern Region	23,478	21,756	21,710	53,343	52,935	55,596
London, City of	212	252	380	399	412	511
Metropolitan Police	62,791	62,462	62,112	112,206	105,701	112,146
London Region	63,003	62,714	62,492	112,605	106,113	112,657
Hampshire	7,159	6,370	6,506	16,204	15,812	15,353
Kent	8,248	8,261	7,237	14,217	15,476	13,361
Surrey	2,091	2,995	2,881	5,364	6,835	6,513
Sussex	7,721	6,940	5,442	17,419	16,851	15,798
Thames Valley	14,492	11,479	10,255	35,972	31,377	31,525
South East Region	39,711	36,045	32,321	89,176	86,351	82,550
Avon and Somerset	10,953	10,430	12,181	23,458	21,918	28,610
Devon and Cornwall	4,366	3,807	3,392	17,072	16,338	14,157
Dorset	2,998	2,609	2,499	8,429	7,049	7,310
Gloucestershire	2,531	1,893	1,828	7,713	6,571	6,312
Wiltshire	1,615	1,346	1,267	4,983	3,925	3,997
South West Region	22,463	20,085	21,167	61,655	55,801	60,386
Dyfed-Powys	868	861	841	1,335	1,259	1,209
Gwent	3,393	3,074	2,610	5,714	5,035	4,406
North Wales	2,310	1,903	1,949	5,191	5,283	5,712
South Wales	15,850	12,019	11,557	17,203	14,218	14,324
Wales	22,421	17,857	16,957	29,443	25,795	25,651
England and Wales	374,686	338,796	328,115	669,232	629,651	655,161

Note:
The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Vehicle crime offences recorded by the police 2002–03 and 2003–04

	Theft of a vehicle		Theft from a vehicle	
Police force area and region	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Cleveland	4,468	4,463	9,826	8,030
Durham	2,423	2,369	5,023	4,704
Northumbria	6,981	6,445	13,283	11,644
North East Region	13,872	13,277	28,132	24,378
Cheshire	4,503	3,994	9,400	8,850

Table 2: Vehicle crime offences recorded by the police 2002–03 and 2003–04

	Theft of a vehicle		*Theft from a vehicle*	
Police force area and region	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Cumbria	1,244	1,060	3,509	3,054
Greater Manchester	26,252	21,870	41,022	37,414
Lancashire	5,585	5,231	13,289	11,468
Merseyside	13,081	11,403	14,973	14,961
North West Region	50,665	43,558	82,193	75,747
Humberside	7,607	7,619	14,881	13,810
North Yorkshire	2,623	2,672	6,947	6,844
South Yorkshire	10,241	9,621	20,948	19,573
West Yorkshire	22,867	19,473	41,340	36,287
Yorkshire and the Humber Region	43,338	39,385	84,116	76,514
Derbyshire	4,062	3,571	12,730	10,787
Leicestershire	4,576	3,986	11,410	10,030
Lincolnshire	2,101	1,932	5,756	4,571
Northamptonshire	3,817	3,642	8,051	9,069
Nottinghamshire	8,782	8,014	22,227	20,303
East Midlands Region	23,338	21,145	60,174	54,760
Staffordshire	4,463	4,209	10,094	9,576
Warwickshire	2,282	2,125	6,195	5,131
West Mercia	3,371	3,432	9,705	8,702
West Midlands	23,598	23,217	37,240	33,894
West Midlands Region	33,714	32,983	63,234	57,303
Bedfordshire	3,111	2,834	8,323	7,337
Cambridgeshire	3,638	3,307	9,707	7,365
Essex	7,664	7,283	13,906	13,757
Hertfordshire	4,287	4,323	12,315	11,916
Norfolk	2,288	2,173	8,451	6,223
Suffolk	1,606	1,459	4,676	4,323
Eastern Region	22,594	21,379	57,378	50,921
London, City of	334	226	360	357
Metropolitan Police	58,405	55,158	114,987	103,899
London Region	58,739	55,384	115,347	104,256
Hampshire	6,278	5,822	15,985	14,947
Kent	7,138	6,749	13,676	12,492
Surrey	3,110	2,947	6,879	6,973
Sussex	5,992	5,313	15,116	13,463
Thames Valley	9,111	8,753	28,518	26,710
South East Region	31,629	29,584	80,174	74,585
Avon and Somerset	11,983	8,705	24,266	20,303
Devon and Cornwall	3,907	3,396	15,470	13,205
Dorset	2,276	2,199	7,141	6,404
Gloucestershire	1,977	2,264	5,763	6,143
Wiltshire	1,308	1,265	4,243	4,185
South West Region	21,451	17,829	56,883	50,240
Dyfed-Powys	833	795	1,195	1,530
Gwent	3,046	3,507	5,286	5,416
North Wales	2,087	2,038	6,005	5,575
South Wales	11,844	9,793	18,579	17,289
Wales	17,810	16,133	31,065	29,810
England and Wales	317,150	290,657	658,696	598,514

Note

The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Wildlife Crime

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on links between wildlife crime and serious and organised crime; and if he will make a statement. [199986]

Ms Blears: The National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit of National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) assess the links between organised wildlife crime and other areas of criminality, including money laundering, fraud, deception and distribution of drugs. That assessment by its very nature has operational and intelligence information not intended for publication.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and *(b)* others concerning wildlife crime; and if he will make a statement. [199987]

Ms Blears: We are currently considering with ministerial colleagues in Defra the Government's response to the Environmental Audit Committee's report published on 7 October 2004.

Xenotransplantation

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the basis is of his understanding that a mediation process has taken place between Imutran/Novartis and Lyons/Uncaged. [200026]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office was informed by Novartis Pharma AG on 8 April 2003, by letter, that Uncaged Campaigns and Daniel Louis Lyons had agreed to submit to a permanent injunction in respect of previously published documents: Novartis also provided a sealed copy of the revised injunction referenced as Claim No. HC 0004406. We were not provided with the terms of the settlement agreement, which we were told were confidential. Novartis later informed Home Office officials, by telephone, that the settlement had been reached following mediation, the details of which were also confidential and not divulged to the Home Office.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Council

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the new Chairman of the British Council was appointed following an open competition; whether a recruitment or executive search firm was used in the process; and how many candidates were shortlisted. [204401]

Mr. Mullin: The new Chairman of the British Council was appointed after an open competition. The Post was advertised on the British Council website and in national newspapers. An Appointments Panel was set up to run the recruitment process. Odgers, Ray and Berndston, search consultants, were employed by the British Council to provide support to the Panel. The Panel included an Independent Assessor who ensured that the Office of the Commissioner of Public Appointments (OCPA) Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments was followed throughout. Four candidates were shortlisted for interview.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what annual remuneration and expenses will be available to the chairman of the British Council in the next year. [204402]

Mr. Mullin: The post of chairman of the British Council is unremunerated. The chairman will receive actual travel and accommodation expenses incurred on official council business both in the UK and overseas. The chairman's travel plans for 2005 are yet to be decided. However, the British Council estimate he will make four overseas trips. The British Council will write to the hon. Member with these costs once they are known.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what creche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [200847]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provides nursery facilities at King Charles Street in London and at Hanslope Park in Milton Keynes. The annual net cost borne by the FCO is £125,985.

The annual costs for the King Charles Street nursery are as follows:

	£
Management contract fee	232,024
Capital costs	21,800
Business rates	16,890

Utility and service costs are not billed separately; this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

These costs are offset by parental contributions of £144,322 and an education grant of £2,832.

The annual net cost of the King Charles Street nursery is therefore £123,560.

The annual identifiable costs for the Hanslope Park nursery are as follows:

	£
Capital costs	1,223
Business rates	1,202

All other costs are met by the parents. Utility and service costs are not billed separately; this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The annual net cost of the Hanslope Park nursery is therefore £2,425.

In each case, capital costs and business rates are calculated on a pro rata basis according to the amount of space occupied by the nurseries.

The FCO is an employer partner in the Buffer Bear network of nurseries, with access to five priority places on the waiting list. The cost of a place varies depending on, among other things, the location of the nursery. Staff are offered a subsidy of between £24 and £45 per week, depending on their grade and the age of the child. The projected subsidy for 2004–05 is £1,300.

Staff are also eligible to use the Westminster Holiday Playscheme, which caters for 4 to12-year-olds during school holidays, at three sites in central London. The cost is £30 per day, which is split equally between the FCO and the parent. The subsidy for 2004–05 will be in the region of £3,500.

European Anti-Fraud Office

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the 2004 annual report by the European Anti-Fraud Office. [204112]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The Government will consider this report in the light of other recent documents and proposals concerning the European Anti-Fraud Office.

Extradition

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is regarding UK nationals detained abroad being extradited or transferred to a third country which may inflict the death penalty. [201704]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: The UK Parliament and Government are opposed to the use of the death penalty anywhere in the world. We would never acquiesce nor facilitate the extradition or transfer of a UK national from one third country to another in circumstances where the national concerned might face the death penalty. We would always make representations on behalf of the national.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a list of those documents held by his Department that *(a)* may be disclosed under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and *(b)* have been destroyed within the preceding four months, that pertain to (i) the European constitution and (ii) the criteria for acceding to the euro. [204462]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) holds a large number of documents, any of which may be potentially disclosable in response to access requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which comes into force on 1 January 2005. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and information will be released if it is in the public interest to do so.

Documents already published on the "Britain and the EU" section of the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk, include the White Paper on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Cm 6309) and the final treaty text (Cm 6429). There is also comprehensive material on what the EU constitutional treaty means for the EU's policies and institutions.

No documents pertaining to (i) the EU constitutional treaty or (ii) the criteria for acceding to the euro have been destroyed within the last four months, other than ephemeral or duplicate material, which is routinely destroyed in accordance with standard records practice. Information about individual documents routinely destroyed is not held by the FCO.

Iraq

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the interim administration in Iraq on the Chaldo-Assyrian Christian community; and if he will make a statement. [203943]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Rammell), gave my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice), on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1552W.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Pakistan concerning the use of the military and police there to train Iraqi recruits. [204079]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister raised the matter of training of the Iraqi Security Forces at a meeting with President Musharraf on 6 December at which my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary was present. They noted the requirement for continuous training of Iraqi Security Forces.

Israel

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli authorities concerning house demolitions in Anata, Jerusalem and East Jerusalem. [203539]

Mr. Alexander: British Embassy Officials in Tel Aviv raise the issue of house demolitions with the Israeli authorities on a regular basis. We have not made any specific representations recently on Anata and East Jerusalem. However, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, in a meeting with Israeli Vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom on 24 November, raised the broader issue of disproportionate retaliation by the Israel Defence Forces in response to the terrorist threat.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking at the *(a)* UN and *(b)* EU in relation to Israeli (i) house demolition activity and (ii) settlement building. [203540]

Mr. Alexander: On 24 November in the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York, the UK, with all EU partners, voted in favour of a resolution on "Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people", which covered house

demolitions and settlements. We also voted in favour of a resolution on 'Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories'.

Where we have concerns over Israeli actions on human rights we raise these with the Israeli government both bilaterally and through the EU. At the 11 October General Affairs and External Relations Council EU Foreign Ministers condemned "the disproportionate nature of the Israeli military actions in the Gaza Strip". The EU has also regularly raised issues of concern, including human rights, at EU/Israel Association Councils. The UK and the EU continue to press the Israeli Government to implement its Roadmap commitments on settlements.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* Israeli Government and *(b)* European Union on destruction by Israeli military forces of police stations in the Palestinian territories; and if he will make a statement. [203632]

Mr. Alexander: British embassy officials in Tel Aviv regularly stress the need to allow Palestinian Authority security forces to operate effectively. We have not had any discussions recently on the specific issue of destruction by the Israeli military forces of Palestinian police stations in the Occupied Territories.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Israeli authorities on the recent judgments concerning the legality of the security wall. [203742]

Mr. Alexander: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply the Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Rammell), gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Huw Irranca-Davies) on 14 December 2004 (UIN 202938).

Liberia/Cote d'Ivoire

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and Burkina Faso regarding the use of border areas by rebel militia from Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. [204471]

Mr. Mullin: An Foreign and Commonwealth Office official met the Burkinabe ambassador to London on 10 November, and stressed the need for all Côte d'Ivoire's neighbours to help the international community's efforts to reach a peaceful solution in Côte d'Ivoire, and not to support any military action including by the rebels. We have not discussed the Liberian rebels.

Middle East

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Israeli Government and *(b)* the Palestinian Authority regarding the Palestinian elections. [202937]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed Palestinian elections extensively with both the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority (PA) during his visit to the region on 24–25 November. The Foreign Secretary was encouraged to find the Palestinian Central Election Commission focused on the challenge of preparing for the Presidential elections on 9 January and working in accordance with the Basic Law. He welcomed Israel's commitment to facilitating the election process, including allowing the necessary freedom of movement of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, to enable elections to take place. The UK is supporting the election process through the EU, which is providing material and technical support as well as an observer mission.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made of the effect the new Security Wall route will have on the living conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank. [202939]

Mr. Alexander: We note that the new route of the security barrier is intended to reduce the humanitarian damage to Palestinians. 100,000 dunams (25,000 acres) of Palestinian land in the area of the Jerusalem corridor will no longer be enclosed. In addition, the Palestinian residents of the communities of Beit Suriq, Bidu, Beit Anan and Qatana will not be separated from their agricultural land. We do however remain concerned about the impact of the barrier on many thousands of Palestinians, particularly in and around Jerusalem.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage discussions between the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority on withdrawal from Gaza. [202941]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary stressed to both sides, during his visit to the region on 24–25 November, the UK's belief that disengagement will deliver better results if it is co-ordinated between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). We support renewed high-level contacts and dialogue between Israel and the PA.

Israeli Prime Minister Sharon has said that he will co-ordinate disengagement with the new Palestinian government. Both Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and Palestinian Liberation Organisation leader Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) have recently expressed optimism over the prospect of new high level contacts.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department plans to take to ensure successful Palestinian elections on 9 January 2005. [203841]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Richard Burden) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1521–22.

Russell Christopher Anderson

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department is giving to the family of Russell Christopher Anderson of Birmingham in their efforts *(a)* to discover

the full circumstances of his death in Rhodes on 30 August 2003 and *(b)* to persuade the Greek authorities to return his body parts to the family or to account for parts they are not able to return. [204025]

Mr. Mullin: Russell Anderson died in Faliraki, Rhodes on 20 August 2003. British Embassy Officials in Athens have closely monitored developments and provided regular updates to Mr. Anderson's family as the case progressed. We raised Mr. Anderson's case with the Greek authorities on a number of occasions during the investigation. The authorities have now completed their inquiries into the circumstances of his death and concluded that he died of natural causes.

Consular staff in Athens have confirmed with the local coroner's office that they continue to hold parts of Mr. Anderson's organs. Under Greek procedures, any request for the return of organs must be made by an International Funeral Director to the Greek authorities. We have explained this to Mr. Anderson's family, who now need to appoint a representative from such a firm to take this forward.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Greek authorities regarding the case of the late Russell Christopher Anderson of Birmingham. [204026]

Mr. Mullin: British embassy officials in Athens have closely monitored developments in Mr. Anderson's case, and provided his family with all the consular assistance they properly can.

We have raised Mr. Anderson's case with the Greek authorities on a number of occasions. This has allowed our consular staff to provide Mr. Anderson's family with regular updates as the case progressed.

Saudi Arabia

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department is offering to the Government of Saudi Arabia to assist with reforms to governance and stability in the region. [202936]

Mr. Alexander: The UK actively supports Saudi Arabia's efforts on reforms to governance and stability in the region. We have regular discussions on such matters at all levels of the Saudi government and Majlis Council. Through the Global Opportunities Fund, we are providing more than £300,000 in this financial year towards projects concerning Saudi Arabia on such issues. In addition, we contribute to regional projects focused on reforming governance and increasing stability in the region. We are also working with others to support regional development, including through the G8 Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative and the EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the recent monthly briefing to the Security Council by its Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sudan, with particular reference to attacks on civilians by the different rebal armies and the Janjaweed in Darfur; [204542]

(2) what plans he has to address the issues raised in the recent briefings given to the Security Council on the issue of Sudan, by direct representation to the Government of Sudan. [204543]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* We are gravely concerned by the latest report by the UN Secretary-General which notes that the security situation deteriorated towards the end of November, with increased clashes between Government of Sudan forces and the rebels resulting in many police and civilian deaths. The report notes that "The SLM/A has aggressively violated its commitment to the Abuja protocols, and if the Government fails to show restraint in the face of provocation by the SLM/A, insecurity could worsen substantially".

We have, and will continue to make clear, to both the Government of Sudan and the rebel factions that they must respect the ceasefire and fulfil their commitments under the Abuja Humanitarian and Security Protocols. They must immediately take all steps to prevent attacks, threats, intimidation and any other form of violence against civilians by any party or group.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan to improve access to Darfur for Amnesty International and other international human rights non-governmental organisations. [204544]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this matter during his visit to Sudan in August, and secured entry visas for Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

We hold regular discussions about the need to improve access to Darfur for all non-governmental agencies with the Government of Sudan. Most recently I raised the need to improve access to Darfur for NGOs with the State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs on 6 December.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he will be making to the Sudanese authorities concerning the attack by Janjaweed militias on eight women and girls from Derajj Internally Displaced Persons Camp, Nyala in Darfur on 2December. [204545]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* We have made clear to all sides that attacks on civilians are completely unacceptable and must stop. The British Ambassador to Khartoum visited Nyala on 1 December and raised incidents of rape with both the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights monitors and the Government of Sudan. We, together with our EU partners, have made clear that the perpetrators of such crimes must be brought to justice. We are supporting the deployment of the expanded African Union mission, providing over £14 million in funding and have already provided £250,000 towards the deployment of UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights monitors.

Terrorist Organisations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* contacts and *(b)* soundings and impressions conveyed between the High Representative and (i) Hamas and (ii) other organisations on the EU list of terrorist organisations were discussed at the General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting held on 22 and 23 November; and if he will make a statement. [204997]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* These issues were not discussed at the General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting on 22–23 November.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200394]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) delivers annually over 200 different types of training courses, worldwide. In addition, the FCO provides staff with opportunities for IT and language training. Some courses are organised, run and paid for by our posts around the world. There is no central record of training courses, location and costs; that information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff but which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200414]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) delivers annually over 200 different types of training courses, world-wide. This does not include IT or language training.

Cancellation of training is rare. There is no central record of financial penalties paid to external providers of training; this information could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, all training contracts contain a clause which allows the FCO to cancel training 50 days in advance of the course date without incurring financial penalties.

PRIME MINISTER

AIDS

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his planned programme of activities to address AIDS in Africa under UK presidency of the G8 states. [204324]

The Prime Minister: We will have a number of opportunities next year to use our leadership during the G8 and EU Presidencies to achieve more global action and funding for AIDS.

Constituent Information (Party Political Use)

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Prime Minister if he will ensure that information contained in letters from constituents forwarded by hon. Members to Government Departments is not stored on databases for party political uses. [205535]

The Prime Minister: Letters from constituents forwarded by hon. Members of Parliament to Government Departments are handled in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, the Civil Service Code and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister whether his special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204283]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Ruth Kelly), on 14 December 2004.

UN Declaration for Indigenous People's Rights

Sarah Teather: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* discussions he has had with and *(b)* representations he has received from Commonwealth governments regarding the proposed Draft UN Declaration for Indigenous People's Rights. [204809]

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware, I have not received any representations from, or had any with, Commonwealth Governments on this issue.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Census Records

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what plans the Department has to introduce an 80-year closure period for census records; and if he will make a statement; [204272]

(2) if the Secretary of State will allow family historians access to the personal records from the *(a)* 1911 and *(b)* 1921 Census; [204273]

Mr. Leslie: It is Government policy that all decennial returns, which contain personally sensitive information supplied in confidence, should remain closed for 100 years. It is very important that public confidence is maintained in the confidentiality assurances given by the Government to citizens when they are required to complete their census forms.

It would, therefore, be inappropriate to introduce an earlier closure period.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Advisory Council on Public Records on the closure period for census details. [204032]

Mr. Leslie: I have had no discussions with the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on National Records and Archives concerning the closure period for census records. The council considered the matter in 1998 and 2003 and on both occasions concluded that a reduction in the closure period from 100 years would amount to a breach of confidence.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent representations he has received about reducing the closure period for census records. [204033]

Mr. Leslie: Since January 2004, there have been seven written parliamentary questions on the closure period for census records. In addition, DCA Ministers have responded to 147 letters from MPs conveying the views of constituents on this subject.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate he has made of the expected revenue that would be generated from a release of the *(a)* 1911 and *(b)* 1921 census online before their scheduled release dates. [204034]

Mr. Leslie: I refer to the answer that my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury gave to the hon. Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 529W.

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Key: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he will publish the draft statutory instrument on the charging regime for museums and other organisations in respect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [204014]

Mr. Leslie: The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 were laid before Parliament on 9 December. These Regulations are subject to the negative resolution procedure, and will come into force on 1 January 2005.

They make provision for the charging regime which will apply to all public authorities, including museums, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Domestic Violence

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many defendants to allegations of domestic violence in the criminal courts have been allowed personally to cross-examine the complainant in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Cleveland Magistrates' Court and *(c)* Teesside Crown Court in 2004. [203876]

Mr. Leslie: The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 provides protection to complainants in cases involving sexual offences, to child complainants and other child witnesses from cross examination by the defendant themselves under sections 34 and 35. Section 36 allows the court to make a direction prohibiting the defendant from cross-examination of a particular witness in person if the quality of the evidence would be diminished in that circumstance or improved by making such a direction. Information relating to how many cases where a defendant has conducted cross-examination in person in England and Wales is not held centrally and to identify each case would incur disproportionate cost. Both Cleveland and Magistrates' Court and Teeside Crown Court have confirmed that they are not.

Principal Registry (Family Division)

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many full days are available for hearings in the Principal Registry of the Family Division before 1 July 2005. [203937]

Mr. Leslie: Between 6 December 2004 and 1 July 2005, 3,466 full sitting days are available for hearings in the Principal Registry of the Family Division (Circuit and District Judge appointments). Of these days 131 full day appointment slots for one-day cases were available. In the Family Division of the High Court (High Court Judges) there are 1,346 full sitting days available over the same period. Of these 71 full day appointment slots for one day cases were available.

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the first day known to be available for a full day hearing in the Principal Registry of the Family Division was on Monday 6 December. [203938]

Mr. Leslie: The first day available for a full day hearing in the Principal Registry of the Family Division, on Monday 6 December 2004 was 18 April 2005. In the Family Division of the High Court the first available date for a full day hearing was 28 February 2005. Although these are the first available dates, Lists are structured to leave capacity to accommodate cases, which the judiciary identify as requiring urgent appointments. Also, Lists change as circumstances in individual cases change.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203453]

Mr. Leslie: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of official Departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205096]

Mr. Pearson: Seventy nine per cent. of Northern Ireland Office Departmental and Ministerial Christmas cards included a contribution to Charity. The charities that benefited were The Northern Ireland Hospice, Unicef and The Samaritans.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205097]

(2) what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205098]

Mr. Pearson: Northern Ireland Office Christmas cards are distributed using either the normal postal system or using an internal government courier service that transports documents between the various government and public service buildings in Northern Ireland. A record is not maintained of which cards are posted in the normal way and which cards are distributed though the courier. It is therefore not possible to supply the postage costs for either of the years requested.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205099]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office bought 6,130 Christmas cards for Christmas 2003 and 5,701 for Christmas 2004. A record of the number actually sent is not kept but it is thought that it would not vary greatly from the number bought.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the eleven departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Counterfeiting

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the involvement of paramilitaries in counterfeiting. [202595]

Mr. Pearson: The Organised Crime Task Force has carried out detailed analysis of the scale of paramilitary involvement in counterfeiting and piracy and its assessment is that paramilitary gangs carry out 80 per cent. of organised intellectual property crime in Northern Ireland, with loyalist and republican gangs equally heavily involved. The Independent Monitoring Commission's report of 4 November 2004 also highlights paramilitary involvement in this form of criminality.

This year the Police Service of Northern Ireland have seized £4.595 million of counterfeit goods and I pay tribute to the PSNI for their ongoing efforts to tackle organised criminals who seek to line their pockets from the sale of illicit goods.

Creche Facilities

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [202509]

Mr. Pearson: Although the Northern Ireland Office does not provide crèche facilities for its staff, it does provide assistance with the cost of child care to staff with pre-school aged children. The Department and its agencies are currently assisting 138 staff at an annual cost of £129,000.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Northern Ireland Departments.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [200877]

Mr. Pearson: The cost to the Northern Ireland Office of providing in-house canteen services was £24,614.52 in 2002–03 and £19,596.92 in 2003–04. We are unable provide the cost of other catering services to the Department as we are unable to isolate these costs from our expenditure on other related domestic and cleaning items.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [200879]

Mr. Pearson: The information requested is not held separately and could be extracted from our records only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [202409]

Mr. Pearson: In relation to the cost of ministerial cars for the 2002–03 year I would refer to the response given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 397–98W. A letter was deposited in the Library in relation to this response which gave the cost of ministerial cars for Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Ministers while in mainland Great Britain. The cost of ministerial cars for NIO Ministers while in Northern Ireland cannot be extracted from other costs relating to the security and protection of Ministers.

In relation to ministerial cars for the 2003–04 year. My hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office has asked Nick Matheson, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the cost of ministerial vehicles provided to his Department in 2003–04. This correspondence will include details on the cost of cars for Northern Ireland Office Ministers while in mainland GB. Again, the cost of ministerial cars for NIO Ministers while in Northern Ireland for 2003–03 cannot be extracted from other costs relating to the security and protection of Ministers.

The costs of taxis booked using the Northern Ireland Office's travel booking service were £21,919.80 in 2002–03 and £13,954.12 in 2003–04. These figures do not include the costs of taxis used by staff for official purposes, the cost of which is recovered from the Department by way of expense claims.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Departmental Properties

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) his agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [200880]

Mr. Pearson: The information the hon. Member has requested for the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), its agencies, and other bodies for which it is responsible is detailed as follows.

	Northern Ireland Office (£)	*Northern Ireland Office agencies (£)*	*Other public bodies for which NIO is responsible*
2002–03			
Annual cost	4,335	150,000	0
Value	264,000	[1]23,000,000	0
2003–04			
Annual cost	1,964	165,794	0
Value	145,000	[1]23,400,000	0

[1] The site of the former Maze prison, valued at £23,000,000 was transferred to the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister for Northern Ireland with effect from 31 March 2004.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Early Release Prisoners

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance was provided to prisoners released under the early release scheme to reintegrate themselves into the community and find employment; and what the largest amount is of state benefits being paid on a weekly basis to a former early release prisoner in Northern Ireland. [202889]

Mr. Pearson: Prisoners scheduled for early release, under the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998, may not have had the opportunity to make adequate preparation for their successful reintegration into the community. In recognition of this, Prisoner Welfare organisations, who received EU funding, were involved in conducting an analysis of the training needs of those prisoners eligible for early release. Training courses in pre-employment, business planning and social skills development were identified as being the most appropriate courses and these were provided at HMP Maze, by individuals and professional community based training organisations.

Special provision was made to permit early release prisoners to submit applications to the Training and Employment Agency prior to their release from Prison.

On release, the maximum discharge grant available to a person released from prison in 1999 amounted to £103.81. In this respect special provision was not made to early release prisoners.

When former prisoners wish to claim benefit they must declare the fact that they have been in prison in order to establish a date from which to claim.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap amongst staff in his Department. [202511]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office completed an Equal Pay Report and Action Plan in August 2003. The Project Board were satisfied that there was no gender discrimination at present concerning pay in the NIO.

A copy of the report was placed in the Library of the House.

Gym Provision

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204367]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland provides three gyms for use by its staff. The cost of running these gyms in the 2003–04 year was £6,236.63. This figure does not include such costs as heating, lighting or cleaning, as these cannot be isolated from the total costs of these items for each buildings in which the gyms are housed.

Northern Ireland Office staff are also able to use gyms provided by the departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Knockmore Hill Industrial Estate

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many businesses are located at the Knockmore Hill Industrial Estate in Lisburn; and how many new jobs have been created on the site since it was opened. [204019]

Mr. Gardiner: Since the establishment of Knockmore Hill Industrial Estate in June 2000, six businesses have located their premises on the site. These businesses employed a total of 336 employees at 31 March 2004 (of these, 99 jobs have been created after the businesses moved to the site). In addition there are a further four businesses that have bought sites on the Knockmore Hill Industrial estate.

Northern Ireland Police Fund

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in

implementing Recommendation 18 of the Review of the Northern Ireland Police Fund on compiling a database of police widows, disabled police officers and their families. [204938]

Mr. Pearson: I have been informed by the Northern Ireland Police Fund that it has investigated the potential to establish a database of police widows, disabled police officers and their families. While the Fund itself has a significant database of its clients, the restrictions of the Data Protection legislation has made it difficult to obtain information from other associated bodies which is necessary to enable the Fund to compile a complete database of all police widows, disabled officers and ex officers and their families. The Fund continues to keep the position under review and will extend the database if and when this is found possible.

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial resources will be available to the Police Fund over the next three years. [204939]

Mr. Pearson: The allocation of the Police Fund's financial resources for the next three years has not yet been confirmed. We would hope that this will be done shortly.

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to conduct a study to forecast the future requirements, services and care needs of police widows, disabled police officers and their families; what resources will be available to this study; and who will conduct it. [204940]

Mr. Pearson: I have been advised by the Northern Ireland Police Fund that prior to the review of the Fund by John Steele it had proposed a study into the current and future needs of police widows, disabled officers and ex officers and their families. The requirement for this study was emphasised in the report completed by John Steele. Funding is available from within the Northern Ireland Police Fund budget for this work.

The Northern Ireland Police Fund is currently tendering for this work which will be undertaken early in 2005.

Police Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average response time has been from a call on the emergency number to attendance by a Police Service of Northern Ireland officer at an incident in East Belfast, using the most recent available figures. [202870]

Mr. Pearson: The information is set out in the table for the period 28 October to 28 November 2004.

PSNI Station	*Incidents/Calls*	*Average Response Times*
Strandtown	1,063	7 minutes 53 seconds
Mountpottinger	358	8 minutes 13 seconds
Willowfield	471	8 minutes 38 seconds

The PSNI give a high priority to emergency calls for police assistance and respond as quickly as possible however on occasions where a crew has two or more calls on their list it is necessary to prioritise attendance at incidents.

Protocol

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* diplomatic and *(b)* formal protocols were observed during the visit of the President of Ireland to St. Joseph's Primary School, Bessbrook, Co. Armagh on 26 November. [204101]

Mr. Paul Murphy: When President McAleese visited St. Joseph's Primary School on 26 November 2004 she was greeted by one of the Deputy Lieutenants for Co. Armagh in the absence of the Lord-Lieutenant.

Rural Development Council

Mr. Roy Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what (1) *(a)* criteria and *(b)* procedures are used by the Rural Development Council to assess an application for grant; [204333]

(2) what grants have been received from the Rural Development Council in each Northern Ireland constituency since it's formation; and for what projects; [204334]

(3) how many applications for grants were received by the Rural Development Council in each of the last three years; [204335]

(4) what the average length of time taken by the Rural Development Council to respond to a grant application was in the last 12 months; [204336]

(5) what projects have been supported by the Rural Development Council aimed at *(a)* supporting farmers or farm families and *(b)* promoting alternative skills training in East Antrim in (i) Newtownabbey, (ii) Carrickfergus and (iii) Larne borough council areas in each of the last three years; and how much grant was awarded in each case. [204337]

Mr. Pearson: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Rural Development Council to write to the hon. Gentleman on these matters.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list contractors working for the Department of Social Development's Warm Homes Scheme in each of the 18 Westminster constituencies; and how many contractors are working on such schemes in each constituency. [202848]

Mr. Spellar: The answer is given in the following table:

Contractors working for DSD's warm homes scheme

Constituency:	*No of contractors*	*Name of contractors*
Belfast North	7	DCI MPI George Nelson Spectrum Premier Services Thompson P and H Keenan Heating Select Services

Contractors working for DSD's warm homes scheme

Constituency:	*No of contractors*	*Name of contractors*
Belfast South	8	Instafibre MPI Energystore DCI George Nelson Thompson P and H Keenan Heating Select Services
Belfast East	7	Instafibre MPI Spectrum Premier Services George Nelson Thompson P and H Keenan Heating Select Services
Belfast West	6	DCI MPI George Nelson Thompson P and H Keenan Heating Select Services
East Antrim	6	DCI MPI George Nelson Felim Quigg O'Kane's Keenan Heating
East Londonderry	7	Cosyhome Homeseal HGS T J McConnell Felim Quigg O'Kane's Keenan Heating
Lagan Valley	4	Energystore DCI George Nelson Bayview
Mid Ulster	9	Homewarm Instafibre Cosyhome Homeseal HGS K J Porter Felim Quigg JMC O'Kane's
Foyle	5	Cosyhome Homeseal T J McConnell O'Kane's M McGonigle
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	6	Homewarm Instafibre George Nelson HGS K J Porter O'Kane's
Newry and Armagh	7	Homewarm Instafibre Energystore DCI HGS Bayview

Contractors working for DSD's warm homes scheme

Constituency:	*No of contractors*	*Name of contractors*
		George Nelson
North Antrim	8	Cosyhome Homeseal DCI MPI HGS T J McConnell Felim Quigg Keenan Heating
North Down	4	Instafibre MPI George Nelson DMC Contracts
South Antrim	5	DCI MPI HGS Keenan Heating George Nelson
South Down	5	Instafibre MPI Energystore DCI George Nelson
Strangford	3	Instafibre MPI Bayview
Upper Bann	7	Homewarm Instafibre Energystore DCI K J Porter Bayview O'Kane's
West Tyrone	8	Homewarm Instafibre Cosyhome Homeseal HGS T J Patterson T J McConnell K J Porter

Schools (Asbestos)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many secondary schools in each education and library board area in Northern Ireland have been identified as having classrooms and other public areas containing asbestos; and what steps he is taking to ensure it is removed. [204664]

Mr. Gardiner: The following table shows the number of secondary schools in each board area where asbestos in classrooms and other public areas has been identified to date. The programme of surveys has yet to be completed in the Belfast and the North-Eastern education and library boards. board

Secondary Schools

Board	*Number of schools where asbestos has been identified*	*Number of schools that still have to be surveyed*
BELB	25	12
WELB	49	0
NEELB	16	16
SEELB	35	0
SELB	13	0

The Department of Education made £4.5 million available in 2003–04 to enable boards to carry out surveys of all schools and prepare for the introduction of the new asbestos regulations. In addition, £3.8 million has been allocated in the 2004–05 financial year towards removal, decontamination work or repair/remedial work, where this is necessary. It is only necessary to remove the asbestos if it in poor condition or at risk of being disturbed, otherwise the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) advice is to leave it in place and manage the risk.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201424]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201449]

Mr. Paul Murphy: None.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203455]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Travel Costs

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* Special Advisers and *(c)* what the travel costs for officials in all NI Departments and their Agencies including the NIO each year since 1997. [203778]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The travel costs for the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), including its Agencies but not its NDPBs, analysed by Ministers and Special Advisers is only available from 2000–01. The costs are as follows.

	2003–04	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
(a) Ministers	1,245,512	1,051,504	847,426	842,177
(b) Special Advisers	37,101	22,656	27,762	1,822
Total travel cost	1,282,613	1,074,160	875,188	843,999

For travel costs for officials in all NI Departments and their Agencies, including the NIO, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 8 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1322W.

The travel costs for Special Advisers during 2000–01 were low as there were none in post for a large part of this fiscal year.

The increase in Minister's travel costs from 2001–02 to 2002–03 result from an increase in the number of NIO Ministers due to the suspension of the devolved administration and the re-introduction of Direct Rule.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 16 December 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agency Staff

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people are employed by the Rural Payments Agency; what the running cost of the Agency was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of the Agency. [203757]

Alun Michael: The number of people employed by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) as at 1 December 2004 was 3,699 (3,543 full-time time equivalents).

The total net running cost of RPA in 2003–04, including change programme costs was £198 million.

The RPA is a major, customer-facing delivery arm of Defra providing a range of services in support of the Department's objectives. It is the 'Paying Agency' for pillars 1 and 2 of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) within England, has a UK remit for trader schemes, and responsibility for the traceability of cattle in Great Britain. As such, it will deliver CAP Reform in England and administer the single payment scheme to farmers from 2005. There are currently no plans to alter these functions.

Bass Trawler Fishing

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with EU Fisheries Ministers on introducing a ban across the EU on bass trawler fishing. [201733]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the light of the European Commission rejection of the UK case for an emergency closure of the pelagic pair trawl fishery for bass in the Western Channel, which was copied to Fisheries Directors of all member states, I announced that the UK would introduce a prohibition on the UK fishery within 12 miles of the south west coast of England. I intend to put a request to the European Commission to have the 12 mile prohibition applied to vessels from other member states operating in this area. In practice, other than UK vessels, the ban would only impact on a small number of French vessels who pair trawl for bass in the 12 mile area. I have passed in person a letter to the French Minister setting out the UK case and seeking his support for the prohibition. Officials have also discussed the measures with their French colleagues at a recent Commission meeting on this issue.

Beef

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what timetable she has set for the lifting of *(a)* the over-30-month scheme and *(b)* the export ban on British beef; [204193]

(2) when she expects the over-30-month scheme to end. [204194]

Alun Michael: Defra will consult the industry and the EU Commission on the shape and duration of a successor to the OTMS, which will be required to dispose of cattle born before 1 August 1996.

Any changes in the domestic over-30-month (OTM) rule and the over-30-month scheme (OTMS) are unlikely to come into effect until the latter half of 2005. Changes in export restrictions are not expected to come into effect until late 2005.

Cattle

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress she has made on the review of the Cattle Identification Regulations. [203643]

Mr. Bradshaw: The review of the Cattle Identification Regulations 1998 (as amended) is currently at the planning stage. We are expecting to work with stakeholders on the extent and scope of the review early next year. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, it is expected that the required public consultation will take place in the first half of 2005.

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to protect buyers of calves that have been sold without a British Cattle Movement Service passport. [203644]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is for the recipient of cattle to ensure that the animal is accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Common Fisheries Policy

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the application of the precautionary principle in the Common Fisheries Policy. [204216]

Mr. Bradshaw: We take very seriously the need to conserve fish stocks, and thus provide a good basis for a viable fishing industry. We continue to believe that managing fish stocks on the basis of precautionary reference points designed to keep biomass and fishing mortality well away from levels at which stocks risk collapse is the best way to proceed. The precautionary principle is an integral part of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) but the commitment of the member states and the Commission is required to make sure it is applied. It also underpins the advice produced by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in which the UK participates.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) her Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which she has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [202353]

Alun Michael: The information requested in respect of the Department and its agencies is set out as follows. The Department does not hold centrally information about properties occupied by other public bodies.

During the last two years, there were a total of 10 empty properties owned by the Department. These comprised:

Four former MAFF Buffer Depots which were in the course of disposal, the total value of which was £1.535 million.

A former Buffer Depot at Rhydymwyn on contaminated land (nil value);

A former Central Science Laboratory site at Harpenden (value £2 million) and former CEFAS site at Conwy (£0.3 million) both of which were in the course of disposal;

A site formerly occupied by Horticulture Research International at Efford which became vacant in October 2003 (value £4.5 million) and is currently being marketed for sale;

Two properties empty for the purpose of refurbishment—55 Whitehall (value £4 million) and 3–8 Whitehall Place (£8.5 million).

Details of their annual costs and values are as follows:

	£ million
Estimated annual cost1 of empty core Defra properties	
2002–03	1.11
2003–04	0.97
Estimated annual cost1 of empty Defra agency properties	
2002–03	0
2003–04	0
Estimated total value2 of empty core Defra properties	
2002–03	16.34
2003–04	20.54
Estimated total value2 of empty Defra agency properties	
2002–03	0
2003–04	0

[1] Includes rent, capital charge, service charge and rates, maintenance and facilities management. Includes the cost of property empty for the purposes of refurbishment.
[2] Based on Valuation Office Agency valuation. Includes the value of property empty for the purposes of refurbishment.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in her Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202171]

Alun Michael: The number of mobile phones held by the Department as at 14 December 2004 is 3,473, of which 46 are the responsibility of the Department's Secretariat. No information is held centrally on the number of phones which have been lost or stolen.

The total payment made to Defra's primary mobile phone contractors for the 12 months to December 2004 is £529,125.23. This includes rental, call charges, mobile phones and accessories. All contracts in place comply with the OGC negotiated contract.

Centralised records were not established until last year, so no details are available for earlier years.

Dolphins

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will release the post-mortem findings for the dolphins that have been washed up on shores in the South Hams since August. [203547]

Mr. Bradshaw: The post-mortem findings for cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) washed up on the shores of South Hams since August 2004 are as follows:

Species	*Age/sex*	*Date found*	*Location*	*Cause of death*
Harbour porpoise	Juvenile male	14 September 2004	Soar Mill Cove	Physical trauma (bottlenose dolphin attack)
Common dolphin	Adult female	17 November 2004	Thurlstone	Live stranding (pending histopathology)
Harbour porpoise	Juvenile male	25 November 2004	East Prawle	Enteritis/ peritonitis
Common dolphin	Juvenile male	28 November 2004	Thurlstone	Physical trauma (bycatch)

Fisheries

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the geographical restrictions and closed areas which apply to *(a)* specific types of fishing activity, *(b)* all commercial fishing activity, *(c)* demersal fishing and *(d)* pelagic fishing in United Kingdom territorial waters; and which areas have restrictions which apply (i) all year round and (ii) during part of the year. [204191]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows:

Closed areas which apply to specific types of fishing activity

Nursery Areas for bass	37 areas in estuaries and around the coast of England and Wales closed by the UK Government, to bass fishing to protect juveniles
The Wash	A ban introduced by UK Government in 1998 on dredging for razor shells, trough shells and carpet shells to protect the Wash and North Norfolk candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)
Sandeel Box	Area (the Wee Bankie) off the North-east coast of the UK, part of which falls within territorial waters, where industrial fishing has been banned since 2000 by the EU to protect

	the food species of a range of predators including sea-birds.
Pout box	Area to the east of Scotland, Orkney and the Shetland Islands, part of which falls within territorial waters, closed to all towed gear by EU measures to protect other roundfish.
Herring boxes	Areas within UK territorial waters in the north-east Irish Sea, Butt of Lewis, Clyde estuary, north east England are closed during spawning periods to targeted herring fishing to protect herring stocks.
Fal and Helford Estuaries	A ban introduced by UK Government in 2003 on dredging for scallops to protect the Fal and Helford cSAC
Solent	A ban introduced by UK Government in 2004 on the use
European	of "pump scoop" dredges to protect the Solent European
Marine Site	Marine Site.
Closed areas which apply to demersal fishing	
Irish Sea	Area, part of which falls within territorial waters, closed each spring since 2000 through EU measures, to targeted fishing for cod in Spring as part of Irish Sea Cod Recovery Plan to protect spawning cod
Clyde estuary	Area closed, by the Scottish Executive, each spring since2001 to demersal trawls to protect spawning cod.
Closed areas which apply to pelagic fishing	
Mackerel box	Area off the south west coast of England and Wales, part of which falls within territorial waters, closed to pelagic trawls since1989 through EU measures to protect juvenile mackerel.
Sprat Boxes	Areas off Northumberland and Tyne and Wear (part of which falls within territorial waters), in the Moray Firth and the Firth of Forth closed seasonally to fishing for sprat through EU measures in order to protect herring stocks.

In addition to these closures Sea Fisheries Committees have also restricted fishing in a number of areas around the English and Welsh coast. In particular Devon Sea Fisheries Committee introduced a total fishing ban around the Isle of Lundy in 2003 to protect the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve. Similarly, the Scottish Executive has implemented a variety of prohibitions on fishing in Scottish inshore Waters.

Ports occupied by the Royal Navy often exclude all fishing activity from areas close to anchorages and navigation channels. Other areas closed to fishing are historic wrecks and oil and gas installations, of which there are many in coastal and offshore waters.

Foot and Mouth

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to public funds was of the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak; how much was requested by the UK Government from the European Commission to contribute towards meeting these costs; and how much was contributed by the Commission. [201024]

Mr. Bradshaw: The cost to the UK public funds of the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak was about £3 billion. The United Kingdom requested £960 million for re-imbursement from the European Commission which represented 60 per cent. of the total eligible costs (£1.6 billion). Of this the UK will receive some £350 million from the EC. This is the largest proportion of the costs of a disease outbreak ever received by a member state from the commission.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what response the *(a)* European Commission and *(b)* European Court of Auditors made to her Department's request for funding to assist in meeting the cost of dealing with the consequences of the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. [201801]

Mr. Bradshaw: Following a full and detailed audit of the United Kingdom's claim for re-imbursement following the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak the European Commission has agreed a total payment of £350 million to the UK in settlement of our claim of £960 million.

In their report the Commission acknowledged the unprecedented scale of the 2001 FMD outbreak. The comments in the report centred on their opinion that the valuers employed by Defra had overvalued the animals culled, and that the Department had overpaid for goods and services.

As part of their audit of the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors made similar comments to those of the Commission and the NAO in regard to the unprecedented scale of the outbreak and with the regard to the overpayments and certain technical and financial inadequacies.

The UK will continue to work with the EU Commission, the EGA and other member states to ensure that the lessons learned from the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001 are applied.

Hague Preference

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the application of the Hague Preference; and in what circumstances she is prepared to invoke it. [204219]

Mr. Bradshaw: Hague Preference (HP) is a Common Fisheries Policy mechanism designed to adjust national fish quota allocations to take account of the needs of certain fisheries dependent areas in northern parts of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. These arrangements can provide additional fishing opportunities to the UK and the Republic of Ireland when quotas for certain stocks fall below determined trigger levels.

When either or both of the UK and Ireland gain from the operating of Hague Preference, this is at the expense of the other member states having quotas in the fishery concerned.

We have refrained from invoking Hague Preference in some cases where stocks are seriously depleted, as in these cases the full operation of Hague Preference could transfer the bulk—or in some cases all—of other member states' allocations to the UK.

Solar Chimneys

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what studies her Department has made of the practical applications of large-scale Manzanares-style solar chimneys. [204038]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have been asked to reply.

The DTI has not made a specific study on the practical applications of large scale Manzanares-style solar chimneys. In the most recent report on the potential for renewables energy—Renewables Innovation Review February 2004—recommendations on solar related to photovoltaics only.

However the results of the Manzanares solar chimney project are widely reported. The technology is relatively inefficient as a means of converting sunlight into electricity (less than 1 per cent. of sunlight converted to electricity). In addition, to create significant power requires a high tower and a vast collection area. In addition there may be environmental impact considerations.

The company EnviroMission are proposing to build the first commercial scale power plant based on this technology in Melbourne, Australia. To produce 200 MW at a practical efficiency in this high solar gain area will require a tower of about 1 km high and a collection area of 40 square kilometres. The DTI will consider reviewing this technology when further results from the Australian project are available.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the attributable interviews that her Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201398]

Alun Michael: All Special Advisers' contacts with the media are required to be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs f she will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that her Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201459]

Alun Michael: All Special Advisers' contacts with the media are required to be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct of Special Advisers"

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202259]

Alun Michael: All travel by the special advisers has been undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code. During this period the special advisers have visited, in an official capacity, the following places/countries at a cost listed in the following table.

Date	*Country/place*	£
25–27 April 2003	France	483.90
5–8 May 2003	Spain and Italy	1,316.39
20–23 May 2003	Ukraine	3,224.03
26 May 2003	Belgium	1,051.23
11–13 June 2003	Luxemburg	731.68
25–26 June 2003	Luxemburg	851.28
30 June 2003	Stoneleigh, UK	448.99
9–16 September 2003	Mexico	4,599.66
5–6 October 2003	Italy	927.06
12–13 October 2003	Italy	1,885.94
9–13 December 2003	Italy	643.40
15–16 January 2004	Switzerland	566.50
2 March 2004	Belgium	259.00
Total		16,989.06

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203467]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the Answer given by the then Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203504]

Alun Michael: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are required to be conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Turkeys

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate her Department has made of the proportion of turkeys sold for the fresh meat Christmas market which were produced and slaughtered in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years for which figures are available; [204195]

(2) how many United Kingdom produced turkeys have been slaughtered for *(a)* domestic consumption, *(b)* catering and *(c)* processing industries in each of the last five years for which figures are available; [204196]

(3) how much and what proportion of supplies of *(a)* fresh and frozen retail, *(b)* catering and *(c)* other

(i) turkey, (ii) chicken and (iii) other poultry in the UK was imported in each of the last five years for which records are available: [204197]

(4) how much turkey, produced in the United Kingdom broken down by (a) weight and (b) number of head, was exported to (i) European Union member states and (ii) third countries in each of the last five years for which records are available. [204198]

Alun Michael: Assuming the majority of turkey meat consumed during the Christmas period will have been slaughtered or imported during the final quarter of that year, the following table provides an estimate of the proportion of the Christmas market met from UK production. Figures are provided thousand tonnes carcase weight equivalent to provide comparability.

Turkeys (October-December)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Production	69	70	71	65	67
Imports	18	11	14	15	21
Exports	16	24	21	21	24
Supply [1]	70	57	64	58	64
Proportion of UK supply which was UK produced [2] (percentage)	75	80	78	75	68

[1] Production plus imports less exports
[2] Production less exports as percentage of supply

It is not possible to identify separately the use of turkey, chicken and other poultry for domestic household consumption, catering or processing industries. The following tables provides statistics on the total production and supply of turkey meat, chicken and other poultry in thousand tonnes carcase weight equivalent to provide comparability. Estimates are then derived on the proportion of total supplies sourced from imports.

Turkeys

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Production	267	255	253	238	229
Imports	50	38	35	47	55
Exports	78	74	78	76	78
Supply	239	219	210	209	206
Imports as percentage of supply	21	18	17	23	27

Chickens

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Production	1,238	1,216	1,263	1,270	1,292
Imports	276	290	282	285	306
Exports	83	74	76	105	142
Supply	1,431	1,431	1,469	1,450	1,456
Imports as percentage of supply	19	20	19	20	21

Other Poultry

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Production	44	43	50	46	46
Imports	23	27	29	34	30
Exports	25	26	32	33	23
Supply	42	44	47	46	53
Imports as percentage of supply	55	61	62	72	57

Total Poultry Meat

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Production	1,548	1,514	1,566	1,554	1,567
Imports	349	355	346	367	391
Exports	186	174	186	214	243
Supply	1,711	1,695	1,726	1,707	1,715
Imports as percentage of supply	20	21	20	21	23

The following table provides details of UK exports of live turkeys and turkey meat and meat products. Exports of turkey meat and meat products are only available by weight.

Type		*Units (per thousand)*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Live Chicks	EU 15	head	2,214	2,128	1,922	1,593	1,635
	Non EU	head	1,796	1,671	1,789	1,238	809
Finished birds	EC 15	tonnes	0.4	0.3	1.4	4.3	2.5
		head	135	105	170	382	186
	Non EU	tonnes		0.0			
		head		2			
Total live		tonnes	0.6	0.5	1.7	4.5	2.7
Total live		head	4,145	3,906	3,881	3,214	2,631
Meat	EU 15	tonnes	27.4	30.8	32.4	26.1	31.8
	Non EU	tonnes	26.0	13.1	7.9	9.4	12.3
Total meat		tonnes	53.5	43.8	40.3	35.5	44.1

Note:
Tonnage figures are provided in product weight
Source:
HM Customs and Excise

Urban Foxes

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the extent to which urban foxes within the Greater London area are caught and then released into a rural environment; and if she will make a statement. [204087]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has made no assessment of this.

It is not unlawful to trap foxes in live capture cage traps and to release them at the same or a different location as long as this is done humanely and as long as the fox is not abandoned in circumstances likely to cause unnecessary suffering.

However, I should point out, that the Department advises against relocating foxes on welfare grounds, mainly due to their territorial nature.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Kettles

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chairman of the Administration Committee what health and safety guidance led to the decision to remove kettles from communal facilities for hon. Members and office staff in outbuildings on the Parliamentary estate. [205403]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: I have been asked to reply.

The Serjeant at Arms is required to ensure that all electrical equipment in House of Commons buildings on the Parliamentary Estate meets health and safety requirements. When this is found not to be the case, the equipment is disposed of.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House whether his Office's special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997. [203924]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband) earlier today.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House whether his Office's special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203964]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband) earlier today.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House whether his Office's special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204294]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided to him by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 14 December 2004

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House whether his office's special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204314]

Mr. Hain: No.

WALES

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed, as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203322]

Mr. Touhig: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Wales Office under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Wales Office will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203323]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office was established July 1999. Departmental policy is to destroy files after they have been closed for five years. Any files which have been closed for five years or more will be reviewed in January 2005 in accordance with the Wales Office selection policies and disposal schedules.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department's .gov.uk websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [199689]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office websites-www.walesoffice.gov.uk and its parallel Welsh site www.swyddfacymru.gov.uk-are compliant to the Accessibility Guidelines.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203457]

Mr. Hain: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

DEFENCE

Departmental Mobile Phones

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many departmental mobile telephones were used by *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials in his Department in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202759]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Information relating to the number and cost of mobile telephones is only available from 1999.

	Number	*Spend*[1] *(£ million)*
1999	6,656	2.637
2000	8,964	2.656
2001	10,958	2.368
2002	13,808	3.395
2003	17,084	3.965
2004[2]	21,260	2.85

[1] Ex VAT.
[2] To end September.

This information is not broken down into numbers for Ministers, special advisers and officials. There are a small number of local agreements in place for which information is not available. Information relating to individual areas, the number and cost of replacement of lost or stolen mobile telephones is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Pay

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [200809]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence conducted in 2003 an equal pay audit of its civilian staff following the publication of the report by the Equal Opportunities Commission Equal Pay Task Force, "Just Pay", in March 2001. I am pleased to report that no major problems were identified.

Fraud

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* other armed forces personnel have been disciplined for the misuse of official cars since 1997. [202183]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The information requested is as follows:

Naval Service

Three officers and four other ranks have been tried and convicted for offences relating to the misuse of official cars. Details of naval personnel dealt with at summary level are not available.

Army

One officer and 23 soldiers were tried by court martial and found guilty for offences relating to the misuse of all types of military vehicles. Details of those dealt with at summary level have been recorded centrally only since 2001. Between then and 2003, 113 soldiers have been tried at summary level for similar offences.

RAF

27 cases involving airmen were dealt with at summary level and two at courts martial, one of whom was found not guilty. There were no cases involving officers.

Gibraltar

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the Gibraltar Service Police Association *(a)* were not consulted on the changes to and *(b)* were not included in the distribution list for the Gibraltar Personnel Manual dated 17 November; and if he will make a statement. [203578]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Trade Union consultation for the development of the Gibraltar Personnel Manual is being undertaken through a sub committee of the Command Whitley, which is chaired jointly by a representative of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and local MOD management. The TGWU, which represents the majority of Locally Employed Civilians working in Gibraltar, has collective bargaining authority to negotiate the Gibraltar Personnel Manual, in consultation with other unions as the TGWU deems necessary. The omission of the GSPSA from the distribution of 17 November was a regrettable oversight that has now been corrected.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* time off and *(b)* other facilities are available to the officials of the Gibraltar Service Police Association to enable them to fulfil their representative responsibilities and attend official meetings in Gibraltar and London; and if he will make a statement. [203579]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Members of the Gibraltar Services Police Association are entitled to time off and use of telephones, postal and other MOD resources in pursuance of Gibraltar Services Police Staff Association (GSPSA) business to a level agreed with the Chief Police Officer (CPO). The GSPSA has very recently written to the CPO articulating for the first time their requirements in respect of facility time, and resources needed. If the GSPSA attend an official meeting in London called by MOD then they will receive full support as do other unions. The subject of facility time was discussed further at a formal meeting with the GSPSA that was held in Gibraltar on 10 December.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effects of Command Secretariat Temporary Memorandum No. 46/04, The Gibraltar Personnel Manual, dated 17 November on *(a)* each category of personnel and *(b)* existing manuals and practices. [203580]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The Command Secretariat Temporary Memorandum No 46/04, the Gibraltar Personnel Manual, dated 17 November, notified staff of the publication of a chapter covering recruitment and will apply to all Gibraltar Locally Employed Civilians, unless there is a need for separate provisions for particular groups or classes. In the case of the Gibraltar Services Police (GSP), local management is in discussion with their representatives in a formal working group to develop particular regulations where needed. The Gibraltar Personnel Manual, when fully developed, will replace the UK MOD Civilian Personnel Manual and in part reflect Gibraltar employment law and customs.

Military Bands

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel are members of military bands in *(a)* the Royal Navy, *(b)* the Army, *(c)* the Royal Air Force and *(d)* the Royal Marines. [204943]

Mr. Caplin: The number of trained personnel in each Service's military bands are as follows:

Service	*Strength*[1]
Naval Service[2]	315
Army	1,000
Royal Air Force[3]	155

[1] Naval Service and Royal Air Force data are as at 1 November 2004, Army strength data are as at 14 December 2004.

[2] Naval Service comprises Royal Navy and Royal Marines, Naval Service bands are provided by the Royal Marines' band service.

[3] Royal Air Force figures exclude a combined total of 10 personnel based at HQ Music Services in Uxbridge and Plymouth Armed Forces Career Office.

All figures include Officers and Other Ranks and have been rounded to the nearest five.

Service Medals

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service medals, broken down by type, are awaiting award to eligible service personnel; what the average waiting time is for personnel after completion of eligibility requirements for each award; and if he will make a statement. [204222]

Mr. Caplin: As at 3 December 2004 there were 2,037 medals awaiting award to eligible service personnel and veterans. This figure is comprised of 46 Iraq Medals, 130 for service in the Suez Canal Zone and 1,861 other awards. Once eligibility has been established, medals are normally engraved and despatched within two weeks.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Suez Canal Zone Medal will be made available to Mr. Rowland A Jones, Service Number 22662619; and if he will make a statement. [204771]

Mr. Caplin: Insufficient evidence is currently available to assess Mr. Jones' application for the Canal Zone medal. If Mr. Jones would like to telephone the Army Medal Office on 01905 772323 extension 8740 it should be possible to resolve his case.

Trafalgar Day Celebration

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish guidance issued by his Department to admirals speaking at dinners to celebrate Trafalgar Day this year. [202793]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The Royal Navy attaches considerable importance to commemorating the Battle of Trafalgar, and Trafalgar Night dinners are an ideal opportunity for articulating to a wider audience the vision for today's Royal Navy. This year, while wishing to avoid being prescriptive about speech content, the Naval Staff circulated guidance to personnel at all levels which they may have found useful as aides memoire for speakers to highlight as key points. These were:

"The Royal Navy (RN) has a tradition of being a world-beating navy. We have this tradition for a reason—good people, good training and good equipment—and also because we have been prepared to embrace change in the face of changing strategic situations.

Once again we face a period of significant change; we must remain resilient and best focus our resources to maintain our position as a world-beating navy.

Our priority is to deliver the core maritime roles of the Versatile Maritime Force: Maritime Force Projection, Theatre Entry, Flexible Global Reach, UK Maritime Security and Networked Command Control Communications Computers Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR).

The work earlier this year to rebalance defence has resulted in adjustments to force levels for all three Services. For the Royal Navy this has resulted in reductions in the numbers of frigates, destroyers, submarines and mine counter measure vessels over the next two years.

Whilst reductions in hull numbers are never welcome, throughout the process we have been absolutely clear that delivering the future vision—a capable, flexible Navy focused on the ability to deliver effect onshore—is the priority.

At the heart of the Versatile Maritime Force is the Future Carrier programme (CVF), which remains the RN's top equipment priority. The work earlier this year recognised the importance of CVF and the planned in-service dates have been maintained.

The world is changing. We must respond to these changes if we are to maintain our relevance and traditional position as the best navy in the world.

We need to remember that our "audience" among the British public, and further afield, is changing, with many not having the same innate understanding and acceptance of the whys and hows of our business as would have been the case in the past. We have an excellent story to tell—and maintaining our reputation with this audience is vital."

Video Conferencing

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [200578]

Mr. Caplin: As of February 2004, the information requested is set out in the following table:

	Number
MOD London buildings	20
Royal Navy	31
Army	86
Royal Air Force	10
Defence Logistics Organisation	47
Defence Communication Services Agency	10
Defence Procurement Agency	5
Pay Personnel Agency	2
Warship Support Agency	2
Total	213

There are a small number of video teleconferencing (VTC) units purchased under local agreements for which information is not available The percentage of offices that have these facilities could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The use of VTC is actively encouraged and the Defence Communication Services Agency is currently revising its catalogue to offer VTC services more widely across the whole of the Department.

TREASURY

Developing Countries (Poverty)

15. **Mr. Miller**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on how an international finance facility would contribute to tackling poverty in developing countries. [205225]

Mr. Timms: Building on the commitments made by the donor community at Monterrey in 2002, the International Finance Facility (IFF) would generate the estimated extra $50 billion in development assistance required annually to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

The IFF would provide a critical mass of stable, predicable long-term funds frontloaded to tackle the causes of poverty, disease and illiteracy, meeting the needs of the world's poor right now.

G8

16. **Mr. Lazarowicz**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the economic objectives of the UK's presidency of the G8. [205226]

Mr. Timms: As set out in Box 2.4 of the 2004 Pre-Budget Report, the Government sees its leadership of the G7 and G8 in 2005 as an opportunity to tackle the key challenges that come from the radical changes currently under way in the global economy. These include: international poverty reduction to ensure that the world's poorest can share in rising prosperity; structural economic reform in the developed world to increase flexibility; openness to free and fair trade; and supporting the drive to tackle climate change as a priority for all industrialised nations.

Commission for Africa

17. **Mr. MacDougall**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the work of the Commission for Africa. [205227]

Mr. Timms: 2005 will be a critical year for assessing progress towards the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals. We know already that Africa is not on track to meet any of these goals by the target date of 2015. The Commission for Africa was established to examine the evidence and identify the action required to accelerate progress. The Commission has consulted widely on its draft conclusions. The final Commission meeting will be held in February 2005, and the report published in March.

The Chancellor meets regularly with this fellow Commissioners engaged in the economic section of the Commission for Africa's work, most recently in Ottawa in October and Berlin last month. In addition, the Chancellor hosted high-level breakfasts in No11 in July with senior business leaders and NGOs operating in Africa in order to draw upon some of their experience and views.

The Chancellor is planning to visit Africa early next year to hold discussions on the economy section with fellow Commissioner and African Finance Ministers.

Eurozone

18. **Mr. Todd:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress towards securing greater economic flexibility within the Eurozone. [205228]

Mr. Timms: Economic flexibility is important not just for the Eurozone, but for all EU member states. That is why the Government remains a strong advocate of economic reform at home and in Europe. Though much progress has been made towards the Lisbon targets for 2010, there is still a need for member states to do more, in particular, to tackle the structural rigidities that hamper economic growth and performance.

Gaming (Taxation)

19. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport regarding the level of taxation on gaming. [205229]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers regularly discuss a wide range of business with colleagues at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. However, as I set out in a written answer on 27 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1293W no such discussions have been held on gambling tax rates. Tax policy is a matter for the Chancellor and is considered as part of the Budget process.

Employment Incentives

20. **Mr. Anthony D. Wright:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on his measures in the pre-Budget report to help people into work. [205230]

Mr. Timms: The Government receives a variety of representations on our measures to help people into work. The success of our welfare to work policies is evident in Wednesday's employment figures, which showed that employment is at near record levels, at 74.7 per cent. The new deal—the most successful employment programme in our history—has now helped over 1,169,000 individuals into work.

Government Staffing

23. **Mr. Peter Atkinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the change in levels of central Government staffing between 1997 and 2004. [205233]

Mr. Boateng: Data concerning civil service numbers between 1997 and 2004 has been published in "Civil Service Statistics". Current information can be found on the Cabinet Office's website.

Tax Changes

24. **Gregory Barker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many direct taxes have been introduced since 1997; and how many times existing direct taxes have been raised. [205234]

Dawn Primarolo: All changes to taxation since 1997 are set out in the relevant Financial Statement and Budget Reports, which are available in the Library of the House.

Child Care (Tax Relief)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will estimate the cost of providing tax relief to employees who receive financial support from their employers to buy childcare services; and if he will make a statement. [204850]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to page 6 of the "Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report" and "Financial Statement and Budget Report 2004[1]" [HC 301].

[1] This page can be accessed at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/7A8/DF/bud04_cha_190.pdf

Correspondence

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letters dated 22 July and 18 November from the hon. Member for Hull, North concerning correspondence from the Vice Chancellor of the University of Hull about the VAT partial exemption method. [204866]

Dawn Primarolo: My hon. Friend will receive a reply to his letters within the next week.

The letter will contain an explanation for the delay in providing a response.

EU Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what EU funding supports the Local Government International Bureau; whether such public funds were used for its advertising in the House Magazine on 15 November; what his policy is on this use of public funds for this purpose; and if he will make a statement. [204066]

Mr. Raynsford: I have been asked to reply.

The Local Government International Bureau (LGIB)—the European and international arm of the Local Government Association—receives no funding from the European Union for its ordinary activities, including the placing of the advertisement in the House Magazine on 15 November. The overall aim of the LGIB is to promote high quality democratic local government and its interests within Europe and internationally—an aim which the Government supports.

Gross Domestic Produce (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the gross domestic product of the London borough of Wandsworth has been in each of the last three years. [205913]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 16 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about GDP for the London Borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years (205913).

The London Borough of Wandsworth is in Inner London West (NUTS3 area), which is currently the lowest geographic level at which Gross Value Added[1] (GVA) is published. The latest published information is for 2001.

The estimates in the table below are based on the regional Gross Value Added[1] (GVA) estimates published in December 2003. These are available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournalGVA_NUTS3_Methods_and_Background.pdf

Gross value added (GVA)[1] for Inner London West (NUTS3 area) at current basic prices 1995 to 2001 (£ million)

Year	
1995	42,560
1996	45,804
1997	50,146
1998	54,903
1999	58,319
2000	61,681
2001	65,426

[1] Information presented here is Gross Value Added (GVA) which is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products.

Inland Revenue and Customs

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with regard to the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise, how many claims to tax have been *(a)* reduced and *(b)* cancelled in the last tax year; and what the sums involved were. [204676]

Dawn Primarolo: Neither the Inland Revenue nor HM Customs & Excise keep this information in this form. It could not be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Older Pensioners

John Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the effect of the measures contained in the pre-Budget report on older pensioners. [205231]

Mr. Timms: The Government recognises that older pensioners have been living on fixed incomes for longer and are therefore more likely to have a lower income than younger pensioners.

Older pensioners will benefit from the pension credit, which this year guarantees a minimum income of £105 a week, free television licences and a winter fuel payment of £300. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced in this year's Pre Budget Report that the pension credit will be uprated in line with earnings and that we will be paying a further £50 payment to households with someone over age 70 alongside the

winter fuel payment in 2005–06 to help with council tax and other living expenses. As a result of all this Government's measures the poorest third of pensioners will be £36 a week better off.

Regeneration Projects

Paul Farrelly To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what funds he is making available for regeneration projects in England. [205232]

Mr. Boateng: This year, the Government has made available more than £1.5 billion for regeneration through programmes such as Neighbourhood Renewal, Housing Market Renewal and English Partnerships. In addition, a significant proportion of the £1.85 billion allocated to the Regional Development Agencies will be spent on regeneration as one of their core functions. Between 2005–06 and 2007–08, the Government intends on current plans to allocate more than £4.6 billion for regeneration, plus a proportion of the £6.7 billion allocated to RDAs, alongside £730 million through the European Regional Development Fund.

Retirement

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people retired in each year group in the last year for which figures are available. [204909]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Drew, dated 16 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about retired people. I am replying in his absence. (204909)

The available information, shown in the attached table, is based on those people who described themselves as retired in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and who a year earlier were in employment. The table relates to people interviewed in the LFS during the three months ending in May 2004. The figures are shown for age groups defined by age at the time of LFS interview. Information about exact age at retirement is not available.

The estimates for the Labour Force Survey are, as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

People who retired during the past year by age[1] three months ending in May 2004, United Kingdom—not seasonally adjusted

Thousand

	Men	*Women*	*Total*
16 and over	120	127	247
16–49	[2]	1	1
50	[2]	[2]	1
51	[2]	[2]	2
52	[2]	1	3
53	2	[2]	3
54	1	2	3
55	3	2	5
56	3	4	7
57	4	4	7
58	2	[2]	3
59	3	5	8
60	10	33	43
61	6	7	13
62	5	10	16
63	4	10	14
64	6	6	12
65	33	14	47
66	9	5	13
67	6	5	11
68	3	3	5
69	4	2	7
70	2	3	5
70 and over	12	6	18

[1] People who retired during the past year are defined as those who described themselves as retired in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and were employed one year earlier. Age is defined as age at interview in the LFS.

[2] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.

Note:

Some of these estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS, Labour Force Survey

Tax Credits

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many child tax credit claimants he has written to with details about the process of finalising their 2003–04 claim and renewing a claim for 2004–05 reassessments, broken down by region; how many have responded, broken down by region; and if he will make a statement. [204735]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of families in each region with awards current at 5 April 2004 are shown in "Child and Working Tax Credits Quarterly Statistics. April 2004." All these families were contacted about finalising their 2003–04 award and renewing their claim into 2004–05.

Some families were required to reply only if a change in their circumstance had occurred, or if their 2003–04 income fell outside a given range. As a result, some awards have been finalised on new information provided and others on the basis of information already provided. No split by region is available of the number providing new information.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credits payments have been made manually for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year. [204857]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* About 500,000 such payments were made in 2003–04, and about 280,000 between April and November 2004 inclusive.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many appeals his Department has received in respect of requests to reconsider recovery of tax credit overpayments; and how many have been successful. [204867]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East (Dr. Kumar) on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1087–88W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the nature is of an exceptional technical problem, referred to in a letter from the Inland Revenue to the right hon. Member for Birkenhead concerning a tax credits case; and how many of these technical problems there have been in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year. [205294]

Dawn Primarolo: If my right hon. Friend would provide me with details of his correspondence with the Inland Revenue, I will look into the matter.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what Inland Revenue officers mean when saying a tax credits case has gone technical; and how many such technical cases there have been in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year. [205295]

Dawn Primarolo: This is not an expression that the Inland Revenue recognises. If my right hon. Friend would like to provide details of the instance when this was said, they will look into it.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what it means when Inland Revenue officers refer to a fatal error, in a tax credits case; and how many such errors there have been in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year. [205296]

Dawn Primarolo: The term comes from an error message staff sometimes see on the tax credits system. It means they could not see details about the taxpayer concerned. The vast majority are resolved by trying again.

It is not possible to provide the number of errors there have been in the periods referred to.

Teenage Pregnancies (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the teenage pregnancy rate in Ribble Valley and Fulwood was in each year since 1997. [205067]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Nigel Evans, dated 16 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the teenage pregnancy rate in Kibble Valley and Fulwood was in each year since 1997, (205067)

The number of teenage conceptions that occurred in 2000 in Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency was 33. Figures are not available by parliamentary constituencies for other years. Figures are available for each year to 2002 for local authority and health authority areas.

Rates cannot be supplied for 2000 as population estimates by parliamentary constituencies are not available for that year.

Telephone Services

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list *(a)* Government Departments and agencies and *(b)* public bodies which use 0870 telephone numbers as contact numbers for members of the public. [205418]

Mr. Boateng: This information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what advice has been given to Government Departments on the advisability of using 0870 numbers when making telephone calls. [205419]

Mr. Boateng: There is no Government policy on the use of 0870 numbers. Each Government organisation is free to make its own arrangements depending on its particular requirements.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to advise *(a)* Government Departments and agencies and *(b)* public bodies to use 0845 or alternative direct numbers in preference to 0870 numbers as contact numbers for members of the public. [205420]

Mr. Boateng: There is no Government policy on the use of either direct numbers, 0845 or 0870 numbers. Each Government Department, agency and public body is free to make its own arrangements depending on its particular requirements.

Vaccine Stocks

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* contacts and *(b)* protocols are in place between customs authorities in the European Union to track and trace (i) virus and (ii) vaccine stocks and materials as they cross borders. [204547]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Customs and Excise have no contact or protocols with other customs authorities in relation to these materials, although structures and relationships are in place that would allow such contacts and protocols to be rapidly established if this was felt necessary. HM Customs and Excise enforce licensing restrictions on the import into Great Britain from countries outside the European Union of animal disease samples and their carriers (such as fleas or blood samples) imposed by the Importation of Animal Pathogens Order 1980. Customs also enforce licensing restrictions on the import from and export to countries outside the European Union where such materials are derived from endangered species protected by virtue of EU Council Regulation 338/97.

Working Tax Credit

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* new applications and *(b)* renewals are outstanding for working tax credit. [205282]

Dawn Primarolo: The child and working tax credits have a joint claim form, therefore it is not possible to distinguish between claims for working tax credit and claims for child tax credit.

Nearly 140,000 new claims were received during November. As at 31 November 2004, there were around 75,000 claims that were waiting for further information or were being verified.

Information on the number of renewals waiting for further information or were being verified is not available.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set up a system to stop payment of working tax credit as soon as a recipient notifies the Inland Revenue that they have become ineligible to receive it. [205287]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credits system is responsive to changes in claimants' circumstances. Payments will be stopped as soon as a claimant notifies the Inland Revenue that they are no longer eligible to receive tax credits.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Anglia Polytechnic University

Mr. Burns: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the date of the public inquiry into the compulsory purchase order relating to the development of the Anglia Polytechnic University site in Victoria Road South, Chelmsford will be announced. [205324]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hopes to make an announcement in the near future.

Estates and Management Ltd.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will investigate *(a)* the activities of Estates and Management Ltd. and *(b)* its treatment of leaseholders in England and Wales. [205280]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not have the power to carry out investigations of companies that own and/or manage residential leasehold properties. Investigations into companies under company law are the responsibility of the Companies Investigations Branch at the Department of Trade and Industry, who are able to consider applications for, and carry out investigations.

However, through the wide-ranging leasehold provisions in the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has significantly improved the rights of long leaseholders. These provisions include the right to ask a leasehold valuation tribunal to determine the liability to pay, and the reasonableness of, administration charges.

On 16 November the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also made the 5th Commencement Order which will bring into force the latest phase of provisions to protect leaseholders and improve their rights. These will include the requirement for landlords to demand ground rent in a prescribed manner before being able to take any action or imposing penalties for late payment, and will prevent landlords from forfeiting leases as a result of trivial debts consisting of ground rent, service charges and administration charges (or a combination of them) where the debt does not exceed £350, unless all or any part of the sum has been outstanding for more than three years. These provisions will come into effect from 28 February 2005.

Government Grants (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much central Government grant has been allocated to the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years. [203590]

Mr. Raynsford: The amount of central Government grant allocated to the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years is tabled as follows.

Government grants to LB Wandsworth

	£000
2002–03	248,308
2003–04	268,124
2004–05	282,588

The data are outturn figures for 2002–03 and budget data for 2003–04 and 2004–05. The amounts are as reported by the local authority.

The grants included are special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Jon Trickett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the estimates of the number and proportion of houses in multiple occupation (HMO) with three or more storeys contained in section 3 of the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions 1999 report on HMOs in the private rented sector. [203907]

Keith Hill: The "English House Condition Survey 1996: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the private rented sector" report, published in 1999, estimated that around 40 per cent. of private rented sector HMOs (excluding converted flats) had three or more storeys. This suggests that of the 447,000 private rented sector HMOs (excluding converted flats), about 179,000 were of three or more storeys. This figure covers traditional HMOs, shared houses and households with lodgers. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will take these estimates into account in deciding where to draw the threshold for mandatory licensing as provided by the Housing Act 2004.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200617]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. During the period 1 November 2003 to 31 October 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister paid supplier invoices, on average, within 4.93 days. During this period, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister paid 98.87 per cent. of undisputed invoices within 30 days or the agreed credit terms. The percentage of invoices that remained unpaid after 90 days in this period is 0.1 per cent.

The policy in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is that all valid invoices not in dispute should be paid within 30 days from receipt. The target in the Office of

the Deputy Prime Minister for 2004–05 is to pay 98 per cent. of valid invoices within 30 days of receipt. This target and progress on achieving it is monitored every month.

Leaseholders (Intimidation)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what further steps he is taking to protect leaseholders from intimidation by freeholders. [205279]

Keith Hill: Long leaseholders in England will have improved protection and rights with the implementation of the next phase of provisions in the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

These measures are in addition to the provisions that have already been introduced to improve leaseholders' rights, and will:

require landlords to demand ground rent in a specific manner before being able to take any action or impose penalties for late payment;

require landlords to first satisfy a leasehold valuation tribunal, court or arbitral tribunal that a disputed breach of a lease has occurred before being able to take any forfeiture action;

prevent landlords from forfeiting leases as a result of trivial debts consisting of ground rent, service charges and administration charges (or a combination of them) where the debt does not exceed £350, unless all or any part of the sum has been outstanding for more than three years.

Prevents landlords of leasehold houses from insisting that leaseholders use a particular insurance company nominated or approved by them to insure the house.

These measures form part of the 5th Commencement Order and will come into effect from 28 February 2005.

Motor Racing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the planning regulations which permit motor racing events on farms or other land holdings; and what restrictions apply, with particular reference to the ability to control similar events on other holdings in an area. [204433]

Keith Hill: Part 4 of the "Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995" (the GPDO) grants a general planning permission for the temporary use of land for up to 28 days in any calendar year, subject to a number of restrictions and conditions. The general permission for motor sports, however, is limited to not more than 14 days in total, in recognition that they may, in some locations, cause problems such as parking, environmental damage, and noise. The use of land for motor sports for greater than 14 days would generally require an application for planning permission.

Unless a planning condition or other legal obstacle (such as a restrictive covenant) affects the situation, development permitted by the GPDO cannot be prevented except by the local authority using its powers under Article 4 of the GPDO to withdraw permitted development rights.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's guidance to authorities emphasises that these powers should be used only in exceptional circumstances. They are intended for use where there is a real and specific threat to the proper planning or amenities of a limited area. Whether to make a direction is entirely a decision for the local planning authority, though in the case of directions made under Article 4(1), approval by the Secretary of State is necessary for the direction to take effect.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what consultation should be carried out prior to the declaration of a renewal area; [203647]

(2) under what circumstances the declaration of a renewal area permits the use of compulsory purchase orders. [203648]

Phil Hope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1119–20W.

Regional Government

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which decisions by local spending bodies require *(a)* authorisation by and *(b)* consultation with Government offices for the regions. [204175]

Phil Hope: The Government offices for the regions (GOs) carry out activities on behalf of 10 Government Departments. A list of the occasions in which local spending bodies require authorisation by and consultation with GOs is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Renewal Areas

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultation is required before declaration of a renewal area. [203044]

Phil Hope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given to my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Huw Irranca-Davies) on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1119–20W.

Social Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the expenditure was on Local Authority Social Housing Grant in each Government Office region in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated expenditure is in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06. [204924]

Keith Hill: Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) was abolished with effect from the 1 April 2003. LASHG spent in each Government Office region in 2002–03 is tabled as follows.

	£ million
London	119.9
South East	186.2
South West	68.3
East	15.2
East Midlands	72.4
West Midlands	19.6
Yorkshire and Humberside	6.2
North East	0.9
North West	10.5
Total	499.2

Source:
Housing Corporation

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will be making transitional local authority social housing grant funding available in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08. [204925]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan the funding stream for transitional arrangements for Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) to 2005–06. In a statement to this House on 5 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 82W. We announced an increase in the funding available to debt free local authorities and on 17 June 2003, we extended transitional arrangements for with debt local authorities to include further resources being made in 2004–05 and 2005–06. There are no further plans to extend the transitional arrangements past 2005–06.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204284]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Ruth Kelly) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204303]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. No departmental special advisers have appeared before parliamentary select committees.

Supporting People Budget

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with local authority social services departments about planned reductions in the Supporting People budget. [204901]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has lead responsibility for the operation of the Supporting People programme.

Between December 2002 and March 2003, three months prior to the introduction of Supporting People, the cost of the programme rose significantly. This led to the commission of an Independent Review of the programme to help the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister understand the reasons for the growth and to help determine what was an appropriate sum to pay for the Supporting People programme. The Independent Review concluded in January that '£1.8 billion is too much to pay for the legacy provision'.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister followed the Independent Review with work on value for money to support the 2004 Spending Review. Following extensive discussions with colleagues in other Government Departments, including the Department of Health, we announced in August a £5 billion three-year settlement for the programme—£1.72 billion in 2005–06, followed by around £1.7 billion in each of the following two years.

On 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 47–50WS, the same day as the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced the individual authorities' allocations for 2005–06.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it was his Department's policy to encourage local authority social services departments to set up independent Supporting People teams. [204902]

Keith Hill: Prior to the start of the Supporting People programme in April 2003, Supporting People teams were set up by local authorities, with a remit to drive forward the programme. The Supporting People teams are responsible for the day to day administration of the programme which includes the service review programme and ensuring all stakeholders are kept informed and consulted. The teams also facilitate the development of the Supporting People five-year strategy; identifying local strategic priorities and highlighting gaps in provision. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has allocated administration grants to administering authorities to contribute towards staff and IT costs of the Supporting People teams in delivering the programme.

Supporting People is a local programme delivered through local partnerships with local government, probation, housing, social services, service providers and users. Local authorities are responsible for deciding which department takes the lead for Supporting People and how work is divided between county and districts. The Supporting People teams should, therefore, forge links with the appropriate commissioning managers (including social services), and social services should be an active partner on the core strategic group and commissioning body.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people, expressed as a full-time equivalent, are employed by each local authority in Supporting People teams; and what budget was allocated to the teams for *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06. [204903]

Keith Hill: A total of 1,176 full-time staff are employed by the 150 administering authorities delivering Supporting People. A breakdown by authority is available in the Library of the House.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has lead responsibility for the operation of the Supporting People programme. Authorities administering the Supporting People programme are responsible for making adequate administration funding available to Supporting People teams. To assist authorities in introducing Supporting People, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has allocated administration grants to contribute towards staff and IT costs of delivering the programme. This grant is un-ring fenced and is separate to the programme funding.

The total administration grants awarded to authorities are:

(a) £48 million in 2003–04

(b) £46 million in 2004–05

(c) £40 million in 2005–06

Allocations to individual authorities are available at: www.spkweb.org.uk.

PRIME MINISTER

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister (1) whether his special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203914]

(2) whether his special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203975]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband) today.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Charities Bill

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will respond to the report of the Committee on the draft Charities Bill. [202725]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government will respond shortly to the report of the Joint Committee on the draft Charities Bill.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201696]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office places adverts in the publications considered most appropriate for reaching the key target audience for a particular campaign. This is decided on a campaign by campaign basis on the advice from specialist media strategy agencies.

Over the last year the Home Office has placed recruitment adverts in the Muslim News as part of the "Could You police" campaign.

Social Cohesion

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated public expenditure on the *(a)* regional social inclusion partnerships and *(b)* Regional Community Cohesion Network was in England in the latest year for which figures are available. [203561]

Ms Blears: The information is as follows:

(a) Neither the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister nor the Regional Coordination Unit directly funds "Regional Social Inclusion Partnerships". The Government Offices for the Regions may in some areas, have established partnerships as part of their wider role in tackling disadvantage at local level. The circumstances under which they are established and resourced will differ in each region.

(b) The Home Office does not directly fund community cohesion networks in England. The Government Offices for the Regions will in many areas, have established community cohesion networks with their partners as part of their wider role in tackling community cohesion at local level. The circumstances under which they are established and resourced will differ in each region.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Caribbean Sugar Producers

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if the Government will take steps to explain the likely social and economic impact of the EC's proposed cuts in price paid to ACP Caribbean sugar producers to the Caribbean community in the United Kingdom. [204065]

Hilary Benn: The Government are conscious that substantial reform will give rise to transitional problems for the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) seeking to develop an export trade to Europe under the Everything But Arms initiative. In order to help inform the debate, and ensure the impact on developing countries is taken sufficiently into consideration, DFID commissioned a study last year with LMC International and Oxford Policy Management, "Addressing the Impact of Preference Erosion in Sugar on Developing Countries". It assessed the economic and social impact on the ACP Sugar Protocol countries of the various reform scenarios suggested by the European Commission, and the alternative options for addressing the impact of preference erosion in sugar, for consideration by the ACP and the EU.

The European Commission has promised to initiate dialogue with the affected ACP suppliers on the basis of an Action Plan, which it will produce within the next month. This will set out possible measures to mitigate the impact of the price changes, including financial assistance and help with diversification where restructuring and improvements in competitiveness in the sugar sector are not sustainable. We attach the highest priority to ensuring that the proposed Action Plan is a success and delivers the support and assistance that ACP countries need.

DFID has also commissioned the Overseas Development Institute to produce a study on "Forthcoming changes in EU sugar/banana markets: a menu of options for an effective EU transitional assistance package". This should be finalised by early next year. It should help those countries affected by reform determine their priorities for a transitional package, including analysis of alternative uses for sugar.

We are now following up this work by commissioning a series of country profiles for those Caribbean countries that will be affected by the change in the EU trade regime. This will assess the impact of sugar reform at both the national and the household level, help each country elaborate their own strategy to cope with the reforms which will occur, an identify options for transitional assistance.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will undertake a study of the relationship between the capacity of the Jamaican

sugar industry to develop its industry in a manner that adds value through the production of bio-ethanol, refining and co-generation, and development. [203563]

Hilary Benn: DFID is working with the Government of Jamaica to manage the transition from the export of raw cane sugar, necessitated by the reform of the EU sugar regime. We are doing this in two ways: DFID supported a "Foresighting Seminar" held last week by the Government of Jamaica. Participants included representatives from the private sector and civil society, who looked at the medium to long-term future of the sugar industry including alternative options for land use. We understand that a number of proposals were presented, and these will now be submitted to the Jamaican Government for its consideration. The workshop was informed by a number of existing studies of the technical feasibility of new technologies, including ethanol production. More broadly, DFID is working with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and in partnership with the "German Technical Assistance Agency" (GTZ) to produce country profiles for Caribbean sugar producing countries which will help inform their diversification or restructuring plans. The profiles may include an assessment of the feasibility of bio-ethanol.

China (HIV/AIDS)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of China concerning the access and cooperation granted to (A) international organisations, (B) non-governmental organisations and (C) private companies seeking to identify and treat HIV/AIDS infected people in (1) China and (2) Chinese prisons; how these discussions have progressed since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [204644]

Hilary Benn: During my visit to China in May 2004, I discussed China's response to HIV with the Governor of Yunnan. DFID officials have regular discussions with representatives of the Government of China on this issue. This includes stressing the importance of international co-operation on HIV, and highlighting the important role for civil society and private sector organisations.

DFID is working to improve voluntary counselling and testing and subsequent care and support for people living with HIV and AIDS in China, particularly in Yunnan and Sichuan. This is an important part of the China-UK HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care Project that began in 1999. DFID has also offered advice and support to the development and implementation of China's HIV programmes supported by the Global Fund. These programmes include identifying and treating people living with HIV and strengthening the role of civil society organisations in China's response to HIV. There have been no specific discussions concerning the identification and treatment of people living with HIV and AIDS in prison.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205100]

Hilary Benn: DFID has produced its own 'Season's Greetings' card this year. UK based teams have been asked to pick up cards from headquarters in London and East Kilbride. Cards have been sent out to offices overseas on request. Individual teams have been responsible for sending out cards to stakeholders and contacts. As these cards have not been sent out centrally the cost of obtaining the information required would be disproportionate.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many Departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205101]

Hilary Benn: One member of staff was responsible for production of DFID's "Season's Greetings" card. A second member of staff oversaw distribution to DFID staff. UK based teams picked up cards from headquarters in London and East Kilbride. Quantities of cards were sent to overseas offices on request. To date 60 UK based teams and 31 overseas teams have requested quantities of cards. Quantities have ranged from five to 250.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what resources his Department has allocated to assessing the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [203804]

Hilary Benn: The DFID humanitarian programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo has increased each year since 1998, as follows:

	£
1998	370,000
1999	1,257,000
2000	3,036,000
2001	5,307,000
2002	11,650,000
2003	12,946,000

DFID keeps in close touch with the situation on the ground, through reporting from the UK embassy and the DFID Office in Kinshasa, contact with UN agencies and non-governmental organisations, as well as visits by DFID humanitarian experts to assess the extent of humanitarian needs. DFID is unable to identify the exact cost associated with this. DFID has also contributed to the co-ordination of the relief effort, including humanitarian assessments, by providing funds to the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the number of people hiding in the forests of Pinga and Walikale in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo following the recently reported increase in violence in the region, what

assessment he has made of the provisions for humanitarian assistance *(a)* in and *(b)* close to the forests of Pinga and Walikale; and if he will make a statement. [203805]

Hilary Benn: On 4 December, the UN Office for the Co-Ordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) reported that an NGO had estimated that 46,000 people are displaced in the forests around Pinga and Walikale as a result of recent fighting. DFID has provided £466,832 to UNOCHA for their Rapid Response Fund to help strengthen the capacity of humanitarian organisations for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to the most affected populations in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo; and £2 million to UNICEF for their Rapid Response Capacity for Emergency Situations to provide flexible relief support in the sectors of non-food items, water and sanitation, health, education and nutrition.

DFID has also committed £490,000 to Christian Relief Network, an NGO, for the rehabilitation of the hospital and supporting enterprises in Pinga, which should help to restore life saving primary and secondary health services for 150,000 people. This rehabilitation also has a peacebuilding effect by giving some sign of a peace dividend; it has also so far created job opportunities for 180 people. 130 of these represent unskilled manual labour, and are mainly recruited from local Maï Maï groups.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203300]

Hilary Benn: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Department for International Development under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Education for All

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the Government have allocated towards Education for All. [204872]

Hilary Benn: Between 1997 and 2002, DFID has committed over £700 million in basic education in developing countries. That money is part of our efforts to help more children enrol and complete quality education.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding his Department is contributing to the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative. [204873]

Hilary Benn: DFID has committed £12 million to the Education For All Fast-Track Initiative over the period 2004–07.

Eritrea

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the percentage of malnutrition cases in *(a)* children and *(b)* adults in Eritrea; what estimate he has made of the percentages in each year since 1998; and if he will make a statement. [204151]

Hilary Benn: In July 2004, the Eritrean Ministry of Health's National Surveillance System revealed high malnutrition rates among women and children in Gash Barka, Anseba and Northern Red Sea Zobas, with global malnutrition rates estimated as high as 19.4 per cent., 18.4 per cent. and 13.9 per cent. respectively.

According to the Growth Monitoring and Promotion report 2004, 50 per cent. of children under five are undernourished. The 2005 UN Consolidated Appeal reports that maternal malnutrition rates are among the highest in the world at 53 per cent. Global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate trends also vary according to the area. Peak rates are still often very high. For example, GAM rates in the Red Sea areas were between 28.3 per cent. in 2001 and 14.3 per cent. in 2003. GAM rates for Anseba were 19.9 per cent. in 2003 and 18.4 per cent. this year. For the period of 1995–2003 UNICEF assesses the percentage of children suffering from moderate or severe wasting (low weight for height), at 13 per cent., and stunting (low weight for age) at 38 per cent. There is no data available on nationwide malnutrition rates before the Demographic Health Survey carried out in June 2002. Since then, these have been conducted approximately every six months.

DFID is concerned about malnutrition in Eritrea and a large proportion of humanitarian funds support specialised supplementary feeding programmes. A team from DFID will be visiting Eritrea shortly to discuss these issues with the Eritrean Government, the UN and other agencies.

Gym Provision

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204364]

Hilary Benn: DFID currently has one fitness centre, in our main office at 1 Palace Street, London. The cost of this facility during 2003–04, after members' subscriptions, was £8,500. We are intending to add a second facility in our East Kilbride office during the final stage of the refurbishment of this office next year.

Health Spending (Third World)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to increase the amount of money spent per head of population on health in the Third World. [204670]

Hilary Benn: The levels of per capita spend on health in many low income countries are pitifully low, often government expenditure may be as little as US$5 per capita annually. DFID works with many countries to highlight the contribution of better health to development, advocates for increased allocations, and supports efforts to strengthen health systems and use available funds more effectively to deal with the major causes of ill health, disability and death. Health needs more resources, both from domestic revenue and through major increases in donor funding. However decisions on budget allocations acro: sectors are the responsibility of sovereign governments. Allocations will increase as economies grow wealthier. That requires more rapid progress on increasing aid volumes, in dealing with debt and in ensuring fairer trade regime.

A number of initiatives have highlighted the scale of need. The Commission on Macroeconomics and Health highlighted the interaction between health and poverty and has convinced many Ministers of Finance that health is a vital investment for the future. The report estimated that delivery of a basic health service would require US$ 35 per capita. The UN Millennium Project is quantifying the costs of meeting the Millennium Goals, many of which are directly or indirectly health related.

African Heads of State, meeting in Abuja in 2000, made a commitment to increase the health budget to 15 per cent. of the government budget—from a level that is typically less than 10 per cent. Progress has been slow to date.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria was established in 2002 to generate significant additional resources to combat the three major communicable disease that collectively kill more than six million people each year. To date US$ 5.7 billion has been pledged to the fund, approvals to countries total US$ 3 billion through 315 grants in 128 countries and to date almost US$700 million has been disbursed.

The UK development budget has increased significantly since 1997. Under the terms of the Spending Review 2004, total UK official development assistance (oda) will rise from £4.14 billion in 2004–05 to £6.46 billion by 2007–08, The UK is making progress towards the UN 0.7 per cent. target for official development assistance (oda) as a proportion of gross national income. On current plans this will rise to 0.39 per cent. in 2005–06 and 0.47 per cent. in 2007–08, and this represents a real terms increase in UK oda of 140 per cent. since 1997. The Government wishes to continue to raise UK oda at the rate of growth achieved in 2007–08 in the aid ratio, which on this timetable would rise beyond 0.5 per cent. after 2008 and reach 0.7 per cent. by 2013. The UK has proposed an International Financing Facility (IFF), designed to deliver an additional US$50 billion annually in aid in the period to 2015. The UK, and France, will demonstrate the practicality of the IFF by launching the International Finance Facility for Immunisation in the first half of 2005. This is expected to double support for global immunisation efforts over the next decade.

Iraq

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many Iraqi civilians have *(a)* full electricity and water services, *(b)* part electricity and water services and *(c)* no such services at all; and if he will make a statement. [204744]

Hilary Benn: According to a survey of Iraqi households carried out between April and May 2004, almost all Iraqi households are connected to an electricity network, with little variance between urban and rural areas. However, only 15 per cent. of households report their electricity supply to be reliable: 85 per cent. of households experienced low voltage supply or a supply of less than 12 hours per day.

Water services for Iraqi households vary more greatly between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, 66 per cent. of households have reliable, safe drinking water; 33 per cent. have access to safe water but the supply is unreliable; and 1 per cent. of urban households are receiving unsafe drinking water. In rural areas, 43 per cent. of Iraqi households have reliable access to safe drinking water, 22 per cent. have access to safe drinking water but the supply is unreliable, and 34 per cent. have access only to unsafe drinking water.

DFID has helped to improve electricity and water supplies to southern Iraq, the poorest region of the country, through the Emergency Infrastructure Programme to which we contributed £20 million. DFID is currently funding a £10 million programme to address further weaknesses in essential services in the south. Electricity and water supply rehabilitation projects are being undertaken under the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, which is managed by the United Nations and the World Bank and to which DFID has contributed £70 million. Electricity and water projects are also being financed from the USA's $18.4 million supplemental appropriation for Iraq reconstruction, and from Iraq's own budget.

Philippines

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the distribution of food aid in Infanta, Philippines on 8 December; what guidelines his Department *(a)* has established and *(b)* is establishing for the effective, efficient and safe distribution of food aid; whether these guidelines are regularly distributed to UK non-governmental organisations active abroad; and if he will make a statement. [204632]

Hilary Benn: On 8 December the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team conducted its own assessment of the relief operation there and DFID supplied one member of this team. They reported that all families in the affected area have received food assistance and that further food assistance would be required. DFID has responded by providing £100,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements' relief activities, comprising a number of elements including emergency food

assistance. DFID will also consider further assistance to affected populations through the United Nations Flash Appeal when this is issued.

DFID is an associate member of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International, through which members aim to make humanitarian action accountable to the beneficiaries. This covers all types of humanitarian assistance including food aid. DFID also encourages all its partners to adhere to Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, and ensures that the non-governmental agencies it supports have in place correct procedures to make food assistance effective and properly targeted. For example, ensuring adherence to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response under the Sphere Project. In the particular case of the Philippines, DFID consulted with the UK embassy, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations in country to ensure that DFID assistance was channelled appropriately. DFID will continue to monitor implementation of its assistance to this end.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* food and *(b)* monetary aid his Department (i) has pledged, (ii) has delivered and (iii) is going to deliver to the Philippines to deal with the effects of super typhoon Nanmadoe; and if he will make a statement. [204633]

Hilary Benn: DFID has responded by providing £100,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements' relief activities, comprising emergency food, shelter, medical assistance, water and sanitation and other essential supplies to the worst hit areas. DFID will also consider further assistance through the United Nations Flash Appeal when this is issued.

We have also provided a member of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team that travelled to the Philippines to help in the aftermath of the storms and typhoons.

Projects (Departmental Funding)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the projects *(a)* funded and *(b)* managed by his Department in (i) the Middle East, (ii) Central Asia and (iii) the South Caucasus since 2002; and how many staff from (A) the country concerned and (B) outside the country concerned are employed by each. [204631]

Hilary Benn: It would entail a disproportionate cost to list every project funded or managed by the Department on a bilateral basis since 2002. Details of all major projects involving DFID funding of £1 million or more for the period since 2002 are provided in the following tables: (i) the Middle East, (ii) Central Asia and (iii) the South Caucasus. The tables also include information on the numbers of DFID staff who have contributed to the development or management of each project. Many of these projects are co-financed with other donors, such as the World Bank; we do not hold information on their staffing complement.

The Central Asia, South Caucasus and Moldova Regional Assistance Plan and the Country Assistance Plan for the Palestinians are available in the House of Commons Library.

(i) Middle East

Project	*Country/Region*	*Date started*	*Total project commitment (£ million)*	*DFID UK staff*	*DFID country staff*
Palestinian Police Support	West Bank and Gaza	December 2004	2.075	5	2
Emergency Budget Support	West Bank and Gaza	March 2004	7.250	9	3
Palestinian Auth UNRWA Debt Write off	West Bank and Gaza	December 2003	5.000	3	1
Palestinian Authority Civil Service Reform	West Bank and Gaza	October 2003	5.000	5	2
World Bank ESS Project Phase 2	West Bank and Gaza	March 2003	2.000	4	2
Emergency Services Support Project	West Bank and Gaza	March 2002	5.000	4	2
Economic Policy Programme 3	West Bank and Gaza	February 2002	1.015	5	2
H-WASP Phase II	West Bank and Gaza	January 2002	5.000	5	2
Primary Health Care Phase II	West Bank and Gaza	January 2000	2.355	4	2
Assistance to NAD	West Bank and Gaza	November 1999	9.200	5	2
ASYCUDA Customs	Yemen	January 2001	2.000	5	2
Social Economic and Financial Management	Yemen	June 2000	5.300	8	2
Poverty Reduction Strategy	Yemen	June 2003	3.000	5	2
Social Fund for Development	Yemen	June 2003	5.300	5	2
Basic Education Development	Yemen	August 2004	15.000	5	2
Public Service Reform	Jordan	July 2003	4.800	4	2
Family Protection	Jordan	January 2000	32.500	4	2
Capacity Building of the Queen Zein Institute for Development	Jordan	July 1997	2.125	4	2
Ministry of Education Capacity Building	Jordan	August 1998	1.500	4	2
Support for Environmental Assessment and Management Phase 2	Egypt	January 2000	6.000	4	0
Capacity Enhancement for Lifelong Literacy Phase 2	Egypt	July 2000	2.500	4	0

Project	*Country/Region*	*Date started*	*Total project commitment (£ million)*	*DFID UK staff*	*DFID country staff*
Recovery Infrastructure Group	Iraq/South	July 2003	7.7	7	0
Governorate Teams South	Iraq/South	November 2003	4	8	0
BBC Media	Iraq/South	June 2004	6.7	5	21
Emergency Infrastructure Project	Iraq/South	September 2003	20	10	20
Reconstruction Transitional Programme	Iraq/South	July 2004	3.5	10	0
South Iraq Employment and Services Programme (SIESP)	Iraq/South	July 2004	16.5	3	1

Project	Country/Region	Date started	Total project commitment (£ million)	DFID UK staff	DFID country staff
Capacity Building in Southern Iraq Governorates	Iraq/South	July 2004	20.5	5	1
Media Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)	Iraq/National	August 2003	1.1	13	15
Emergency Public Administration Programme	Iraq/National	July 2004	3	16	4
Support to Justice Sector	Iraq/National	February 2004	2	1	1
Support for Macroeconomic Reform	Iraq/National	July 2004	3	8	3
Political Participation Fund	Iraq/National	October 2004	5	7	2
Civil Society Challenge Fund	Iraq/National	June 2004	5	5	2

(ii) Central Asia

Project	Country/Region	Date started	Total project commitment (£ million)	DFID UK staff	DFID country staff
Nura River Basin	Kazakhstan	April 2002	1.2	4	1
Primary Health Care	Uzbekistan	August 1998	1.3	4	1
National Social Investment Fund	Tajikistan	March 2004	1.5	4	2
Micro Small Enterprise	Tajikistan	July 2003	1.2	4	2
Government Structural Adjustment Credit	Kyrgystan	August 2004	4.9	4	4
Rural Water Supply and Sanitation	Kyrgystan	November 2001	4	4	4
Rural Hygiene and Sanitation	Kyrgystan	March 2002	3.3	4	4
Tariff Policy Project	Kyrgystan	January 2002	1.5	4	4
Support to Village Investment	Kyrgystan	June 2004	1.1	4	4
Central Asia Regional HIV/AIDS	Central Asia	October 2004	6.4	6	8

(iii) South Caucasus

Project	Country/Region	Date started	Total project commitment (£ million)	DFID UK staff	DFID country staff
Primary Health Care Programme	Georgia	November 2003	5	4	3
Mental Health Programme	Georgia	October 2000	1.7	4	3
Primary Health Care	Georgia	September 2000	1.3	4	3
Support to the State Department of Statistics	Georgia	July 1999	1.1	4	3
Governance and Civil Society Strengthening	Georgia	July 1999	1	4	3
Armenia Regional Development Programme	Armenia	June 2003	4.5	4	3
Armenia Public Sector Reform Programme	Armenia	April 2002	3.5	5	3
Medium Term Expenditure Framework	Armenia	November 2000	1.3	5	3
Support for Armenia Social Investment Fund II	Armenia	February 2001	1.2	5	3

Sexual Health (Developing Countries)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is on sexual education in developing countries; if he will list the 10 countries where his Department has experienced the most difficulty in implementing this policy; and if he will make a statement. [204635]

Hilary Benn: The UK believes that sexual and reproductive health are fundamental human rights and remains committed to the Programme of Action (POA) agreed at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and its target of reproductive health for all by 2015. As part of the POA, education about population and health issues, including sexual and reproductive health is recognised as central within curricula for formal and non-formal schooling. These include health issues to promote the well-being of adolescents, education to enhance gender equality and equity as well as educate about responsible sexual behaviour and protection from early and unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

The UK is also committed to meeting the goal of universal access to primary education by 2015, with special efforts being made to increase the retention rate of girls in primary and secondary schools.

DFID's approach is to support countries themselves to develop policy and strategy on these issues, within the context of their own overall poverty reduction plans. It is not feasible to draw up a list of the 10 countries where implementation of these policies has been most difficult, as each country has it's own cultural, religious and ethical standards.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204312]

Hilary Benn: No DFID special advisers have appeared in an official capacity before the International Development Committee or any other select committee since May 1997.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the debt relief package proposed to the Government of Sudan by the US Administration; and whether the UK Government will be offering a similar package. [203768]

Hilary Benn: I am not aware that the US Administration has made a formal offer on debt relief to the Government of Sudan at this time. In common with other creditor countries including the UK, DFID would expect the US to extend debt relief to Sudan through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative once a Comprehensive Peace Agreement is in place and the situation in Darfur has improved. The UK Government, together with our G7 colleagues, goes beyond the requirements of the HIPC Initiative and writes off 100 per cent. of all bilateral debts for HIPC countries when they qualify. DFID also plans to assist Sudan in the process of normalising its relations with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) through chairing a Support Group focused on clearing arrears to the IFIs.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the percentage of food aid reaching the target population in Darfur in each month since April; and if he will make a statement. [204636]

Hilary Benn: The UN Humanitarian Needs Profile for Darfur reports that the percentage of people in need receiving food aid each month since April is as follows:

	Percentage
April	57
May	70
June	52
July	76
August	57
September	70
October	[1]58
November	[1]65

[1] *Source:* WFP

Fluctuations reflect the rising number of people affected by the conflict, problems of access by agencies to determine the number of vulnerable people, the continuing insecurity, and the increase in the capacity of the World Food Programme to deliver assistance. Insecurity continues to be the main constraint on delivery. For example, the recent attack on Save the Children which killed two of their staff on 12 December, led to their humanitarian operations in South Darfur being suspended. We continue to work urgently with the AU and others in the international community to address the security situation both through protection measures on the ground and pressure on all parties to use the political process in Abuja to resolve the issues underlying the conflict.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment has been made of the security requirements of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and aid agencies operating in Darfur; how these requirements are being met; what proposals his Department has *(a)* drawn up and *(b)* discussed with (i) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and (ii) the Ministry of Defence to improve the security coverage extended to NGOs and aid agencies operating in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [204638]

Hilary Benn: Humanitarian agencies in Darfur are operating in a very difficult and insecure environment. The tragic deaths of Save the Children workers in October and December, as well as the recent upsurge in fighting are stark reminders of the challenges faced.

The security and humanitarian protocols signed in Abuja reinforce the need for both side to allow humanitarian operations to go unhindered and the UK is pushing all sides to implement these. The joint FCO/DFID Sudan Unit holds regular update meetings with other government departments including the MoD.

DFID's funding to UN agencies and NGOs includes support for security and communications to help agencies operate safely. The Department has recently committed a further £820,000 to the UN which will fully fund the operation of the UN Security Co-ordinator in Darfur up to September 2005.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment has been made of the impact on the humanitarian situation in Darfur of the African Union's mission to Darfur. [204639]

Hilary Benn: The greatest need in Darfur is for an improvement in the security situation. The African Union (AU) mission has a key role to play in this. They are in the process of expanding from less than 500 to more than 3,000 troops. The current mission (of approximately 800) is already having an impact on the ground. They have directly intervened in some areas to defuse tensions and have secured the release of some hostages. DFID is working with other donors to ensure the AU has the support it needs. DFID has committed over £14 million to the mission (from which we have purchased and flown in 143 vehicles) and the Department has provided military planning support to the AU in Addis.

The AU is specifically mandated to "contribute to a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief." The AU has offered to provide military escort to relief convoys. The World Food Programme (WFP) has negotiated arrangements under this offer, but has yet to utilise them. However, some NGOs consider that they would be more at risk of being targeted if they travelled under armed escort.

CABINET OFFICE

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) whether Cabinet Office departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203928]

(2) whether Cabinet Office special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203957]

Mr. Miliband: The terms and conditions under which special advisers are appointed are set out in the Model Contract for Special Advisers and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers. Under the terms of the Civil Service Order in Council, up to three special adviser posts in the Prime Minister's office can have executive

powers which would allow them to authorise expenditure and give instructions to civil servants. One special adviser currently has such powers.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Funding

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the value at 1997 prices was of Government support in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04 to (i) the arts and (ii) opera. [205029]

Estelle Morris: Exchequer funding for the arts is channelled through Arts Council England (ACE). ACE's total arts investment and total opera investment for the years requested is as follows:

£

	Total arts council investment	*Total arts council investment in opera*
1996–97 Total investment	185,133,000	30,233,082
2003–04 Total investment	310,455,000	41,684,401
2003–04 at 1996–97 prices	261,238,569	35,076,173

Heritage Lottery Fund

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the likely effects of the National Lottery Bill on the income of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland. [204059]

Estelle Morris: The provision in the National Lottery Bill which alters the basis on which investment earnings on the National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDF) balance are shared between distributing bodies may have some effect on the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF's) income. Whether and to what extent this happens depends on what proportion of the overall NLDF balance is held on the HLF's behalf when this provision comes into effect. We cannot yet know what this proportion will be. The HLF will, however, continue to receive 16.66 per cent. of all the income generated for good causes after the provision takes effect.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is a UK-wide distributor and there is no discrete income stream for Scotland. The amount that is awarded by HLF to projects in Scotland is a matter for the HLF itself.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what provisions she has put in place to guarantee funding to Heritage Lottery Fund projects whose funding has already been agreed but which has not been drawn down following a change in funding arrangements. [204213]

Estelle Morris: The management of grants made by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to individual projects is a matter for HLF itself, not for the Government. However, the provisions in the National Lottery Bill to do with National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDF) balances do not represent a threat to existing HLF commitments. HLF's forward commitments currently exceed its NLDF balance by around £175 million. Income from the Lottery should, based on the Department's latest projections and taking into account the proposals in the Bill, comfortably exceed £200 million in each of the next four years. We will not exercise any new powers in a way which puts at risk any existing grant.

Olympic Medals

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how she has assessed the effectiveness of the investment made by the Government towards achieving Olympic medal success for the UK. [204733]

Mr. Caborn: The investment to help our top athletes achieve Olympic medal success is primarily provided through the lottery funded World Class Performance Programme administered by UK Sport.

UK Sport has conducted a series of reviews following the Sydney and Athens Olympics/Paralympics on a sport by sport basis, in partnership with the British Olympic Association and the British Paralympic Association. The purpose of the reviews is to confirm priorities, provide lessons learned in the build up to, and at the Games so that appropriate revisions could be made to the World Class Performance Programme (WCPP) for the new Olympic cycle and to inform decisions on the funding to be provided to each of the sports over the next four years.

Details of the post-Sydney reviews were presented to and agreed by Ministers at the Sports Cabinet in February 2001, while the level of investment to be provided to assist our top athletes to achieve Olympic medal success, was agreed as part of UK Sport's Business Plan 2005–09, by the Sports Cabinet in April this year.

UK Sport also undertakes annual reviews of national governing bodies performance against targets and of the future funding need. In addition, UK Sport is required to report, annually to DCMS, as part of their Funding Agreement on its performance in meeting WCPP targets.

Finally, a number of external reviews have been conducted into the support provided to our elite athletes including the Elite Sports Funding Review published in 2002 and a report by the National Audit Office into support for elite athletes is due to be published early next year.

Restoration Costs

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the costs of works required to *(a)* improve museums and galleries, *(b)* repair Grade I and Grade II buildings at risk and *(c)* restore historic parks. [204058]

Mr. Caborn: Detailed information on the condition of England's historic environment is contained in Heritage Counts, published by English Heritage. Copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

On the specific points raised by the hon. Member:

(a) DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries and the British Library estimate that improvements would cost approximately £90 million in each of 2006–07 and

2007–08. The Spending Review allocations announced on 13 December will contribute some £60 million towards meeting this cost over these two years. No figures are available for museums and galleries not sponsored by DCMS.

(b) The cost to bring all the buildings on English Heritage's Building At Risk register into repair and, where applicable, use is approximately £400 million. Only Grade I and II* buildings are included on the register. No estimate is available for Grade II buildings.

(c) No estimate is available for the cost of restoring historic parks. However, it is estimated that on all parks there was a cumulative underspend of £1.3 billion between 1980 and 2000. Additionally, the Royal Parks Agency estimate they have a total maintenance backlog of £110 million, including spending on buildings, roads Department for Culture, Media and Sport Parliamentary Branch 2–4 Cockspur Street London SW1Y 5DH www.culture.gov.uk and other facilities.

Sports Matches (Radio Rights)

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State, for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will investigate the BBC's acquisition of national radio rights to Premier League and FA Cup football matches to be broadcast on Five Live Sports Extra; whether this is in breach of the conditions laid down by the Secretary of State for the operation of the station; and whether the BBC requested that these rights be excluded from the packages of the rights that they acquired. [199703]

Estelle Morris: Tim Gardam's independent review of the BBC's digital radio services, commissioned by the Secretary of State and published in October 2004 recommends a review of the BBC's strategy for, and approach to, radio sports rights negotiations. My right hon. Friend is considering, in the context of Charter Review, how best to take forward this recommendation.

TRANSPORT

A1 (Dishforth to Barton)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons he has postponed the improvements scheduled to the A1 Dishforth to Barton section; and if he will make a statement. [204977]

Mr. Jamieson: In light of the recent SR2004 spending settlement a thorough review of the Targeted Programme of Improvement (TPI) programme has been carried out. Subject to the completion of statutory procedures and availability of funding the Al Dishforth to Barton Improvement is scheduled to reach the start of construction in 2008.

A14 Improvements

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when the public consultation into the major improvements to the A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge road will take place; [205180]

(2) whether he expects that the delay to the public consultation on the improvements to the A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge road will delay the completion of the building of the new road; [205181]

(3) whether the Highways Agency made the decision to delay the consultation into the major improvements to the A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge road. [205182]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* Public consultation on proposals for the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Improvement is now expected to start in Spring 2005.

The delay in public consultation will put further pressure on the target date of 2008–09 for the start of the works envisaged when the scheme entered the Targeted Programme of Improvements last year. I have asked the Highways Agency to do what they can to reduce the time from announcement of the preferred route after consultation to the award of a Contract. I am hopeful that any slippage to the completion date will be slight, but is delivery will depend on the completion of the necessary statutory procedures and the availability of funds.

The public consultation has been put back to allow more time for the Highways Agency to consider an alternative proposal to the scheme recommended by the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Study (CHUMMS). The alternative has been put forward as a result of consultations with the various stakeholders in preparation for the public consultation.

Dorchester Road Relief Road

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what route he has approved for the Dorchester Road Relief Road in Weymouth; [204933]

(2) what funding has been promised in each of the next 10 years for building the Dorchester Road Relief Road in Weymouth; [204934]

(3) what discussions the Department had with Dorset county council about re-routing the Dorchester Road Relief Road in Weymouth; [204935]

(4) what factors led the Department to withdraw their support for building the Dorchester Road Relief Road in Weymouth on the Brown Route; [204936]

(5) if he will list each conditional approval for the building of the Dorchester Road Relief Road in Weymouth, identifying the route proposed, the date of approval and for the earlier schemes the date of and reasons for not proceeding. [204937]

Mr. Jamieson: Dorset county council's bid for funding the Weymouth Relief Road using the "brown" route was provisionally approved in December 2000 as part of the 2000 Local Transport Settlement. Subsequently in spring 2003, Dorset county council decided that the route should be changed to the "orange" route.

A bid for funding this revised scheme was submitted in July 2003. The funding bid was Provisionally Approved in the December 2003 Local Transport Capital Settlement, subject to the completion of the

relevant statutory processes and final approval by Ministers. As part of this provisional approval, we agreed to provide up to £54.567 million.

Funding profiles have yet to be determined and will be finalised once the scheme has completed its statutory procedures and returned for full approval. Officials from my Department and the Government Office for the south west have held a number of discussions with the promoters of this scheme, Dorset county council, over a number of years.

Conditional approvals for this scheme have been as follows:

December 2000—Dorset's funding bid for "brown" route scheme provisionally approved by Department for Transport.

Spring 2003—Change from the "brown" route to the "orange" route approved by Dorset county council.

December 2003—Dorset's funding bid for "orange" route scheme provisionally approved by Department for Transport.

Kent Integrated Rail Franchise

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will authorise the final invitation to tender for the Kent Integrated Rail Franchise; when he will publish the relevant and related information for stakeholders; when he expects the *(a)* tender process to be completed and *(b)* franchise to be awarded; and if he will make a statement. [204841]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* The final Invitation to Tender is being finalised and the SRA intends to issue this to bidders early in the new year. A stakeholder briefing setting out the future service pattern for Kent services will be published at the same time. Bids will be submitted summer 2005. It is intended that a new operator will be in place late 2005.

North-east Rail Services

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effects of the potential closure of north-east rail services between *(a)* Saltburn and Bishop Auckland and *(b)* Middlesbrough and Whitby. [204829]

Mr. McNulty: None. There are no plans to close these services. The routes between Darlington and Bishops Auckland and between Guisborough Junction and Whitby are proposed for designation as Community Rail lines as part of the Strategic Rail Authority's (SRA) Community Rail Development Strategy.

Paddington Rail Crash

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Department intends to meet the recommendations contained in the Paddington Declaration resulting from the public inquiries that took place following the crash. [204898]

Mr. McNulty: The Health and Safety Commission (HSC), as the independent rail safety regulator, have published reports showing that 268 of the 295 public inquiry recommendations made following the Southall and Ladbroke Grove crashes have been completed.

The HSC say that work is already well under way on the 27 outstanding recommendations and expects most of these to be completed by the time it publishes its next progress report in 2005.

Pharmaceuticals (Driving)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department takes to advise people using *(a)* prescription and *(b)* over-the-counter pharmaceuticals of their possible effects on driving; and if he will make a statement. [204961]

Mr. Jamieson: Doctors and pharmacists should provide information on the effects on driving when dispensing prescriptions or other medicines.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) provides advice to medical professionals through its "At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive", which is available on the Agency's website (www.dvla.gov.uk).

The Department is currently researching the attitudes of UK health professionals about providing 'fitness-to-drive' advice to the public. This includes an examination of advice given in relation to medication.

Railway Network (Suicides)

Mr. Quentin Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many suicides took place on the railway network in the United Kingdom in the last 12-month period for which figures are available; and what the equivalent figure was 10 years ago. [204725]

Mr. McNulty: The number of reported suicides on the railways in Great Britain for 2003–04 was 75, although this number is provisional and is subject to change based on Coroners' findings. The equivalent figure for 1993–94 was 141. This data is taken from the Health and Safety Executive's annual rail safety reports, copies of which are available in the House Library. The data covers all railways, including Network Rail, London Underground and heritage railways.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what new transport powers he approved for elected regional assemblies in addition to the powers set out in the Draft Regional Assemblies Bill, between the publication of the Draft Bill and the close of poll in the North East referendum. [204592]

Mr. McNulty: The transport powers proposed for elected regional assemblies were clearly set out in the draft Bill and accompanying Policy Statement. They would have given an elected assembly a significantly greater role and say in transport issues than the existing regional assemblies.

Registered Motor Vehicles

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many registered motor vehicles there were on British roads in each decade since 1974; and what estimates he has made for the next three decades. [204900]

Mr. Jamieson: The figures required, as at the end of each decade, are as follows:

	Number (million)
1974–83	20.21
1984–93	24.83
1994–2003	31.21

This Department does not forecast registered vehicles. Its forecast of the growth of traffic during 2000–2025 is published on page 44 of the Department's White Paper 'The Future of Transport: a Network for 2030', a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

School Transport

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many and what percentage of trips to school by five to eight year olds were by bus in the latest year for which figures are available; and what proportion of these were *(a)* under two miles and *(b)* two miles and over, broken down by region; [204716]

(2) how many and what percentage of trips to school by nine to 16-year-olds were by bus in the latest year for which figures are available; and what proportion of these were *(a)* under three miles and *(b)* three miles and over, broken down by region. [204717]

Charlotte Atkins: The National Travel Survey provides the data requested. In 2002–03, five to eight year olds made on average 18 trips to school by bus per year. This was 6 per cent. of all school trips. Of the school trips by bus, 31 per cent. were under two miles and 69 per cent. were two miles or above. Figures for regions cannot be provided because of the small number of primary school children that travel to school by bus.

The following table shows data for nine to 16-year-olds. The sample sizes are too small to provide reliable estimates for the North East and Wales.

Numbers of trips are averaged over all children. Bus includes local and private school buses. Figures exclude trips over 50 miles.

Trips to and from school 2002–03

Percentage trips

	9–16 years				
				Percentage of those trips by bus	
Regional	*Bus trips per child per year*	*All trips per child per year*	*Percentage of trips by bus*	*Under three miles*	*Three miles and over*
North East	—	—	—	—	—
North West	77	323	24	43	57
Yorkshire and the Humber	65	328	20	27	73
East Midlands	89	303	29	36	64
West Midlands	73	314	23	29	71
East	73	312	23	25	75
London	85	311	27	40	60
South East	79	334	24	18	82
South West	79	326	24	22	78
England	77	319	24	31	69
Wales	—	—	—	—	—
Scotland	125	375	33	37	63
Great Britain	85	325	26	31	69

Source:
National Travel Survey, DfT

Sick Leave

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204516]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was established following machinery of Government changes in May 2002.

The annual report 'Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service' published by the Cabinet Office in November 2004 contains reported sickness absence data for the calendar year 2003 for the Department and its Agencies. Reports for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website.

The Department is committed to managing sick absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published 'Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector.

Stonehenge Inquiry

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when the last day of the A303 Stonehenge Inquiry was; [204595]

(2) when the Inspector's target date was for submission of the A303 Stonehenge Inquiry report to the Secretary of State; [204596]

(3) when the Inspector submitted his report on the A303 Stonehenge Inquiry; [204597]

(4) when he will make a decision on the Inspector's report on the A303 Stonehenge Inquiry; [204598]

(5) what the latest advice was that was given by the Highways Agency to the contractors involved in the scheme that was the subject of the A303 Stonehenge Inquiry; [204599]

(6) whether compensation will be paid to contractors for the delayed start to the scheme being determined by the A303 Stonehenge Inquiry. [204600]

Mr. Jamieson: The local inquiry closed on 11 May 2004.

There is no target date set for receipt of the Inspector's report. Under a Service Level Agreement the Planning Inspectorate gives the Inspector three working days for each sitting day of the inquiry to write his report plus an additional 20 days for administration purposes. But it is accepted that this process can take longer on exceptional schemes because of the complexity of the submissions and representations made to him at the local inquiry.

The Inspector's report has not yet been received.

A decision will be announced by the First Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Transport jointly as soon as possible after receipt of the inquiry Inspector's report.

The Highways Agency has advised the contractors working on the scheme that the Secretaries of State are currently awaiting the Inspector's report.

The contractors are paid for the work they do in preparing the scheme and we do not anticipate making any compensation payments.

Traffic Signals (A1)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport at whose request, and at what cost, the traffic signals at the Stamfordham Road/A1 Western Bypass were installed; on how many occasions the lights have been in use; and whether it is planned that the lights should be used again. [204404]

Mr. Jamieson: The traffic signals at the Stamfordham Road/A1 Newcastle Western Bypass Junction were funded by the developers of Newcastle Great Park. The works are part of a package of measures imposed by the Highways Agency as conditions on the granting of planning permission for the development. Newcastle city council, as highway authority for Stamfordham Road and planning authority, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the proposals and is best placed to provide information on the current operation of the signals and their future use.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to persuade those countries who have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to do so. [204418]

Mr. MacShane: The United Kingdom strongly supports universalisation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is an important part of the international regime to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the Third Article XIV Conference on Facilitating entry into force of the Treaty (September 2003), my right hon. Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean urged all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty. Baroness Symons also represented my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary at a Meeting of Foreign Ministers in New York in September and signed a statement on his behalf reaffirming our support for the Treaty and once again calling for its early entry into force.

In addition, we have carried out demarches both as part of the EU and bilaterally and will continue to do so. We have used our embassies and high commissions to assist the Provisional Technical Secretariat and the Executive Secretary of the CTBT in regional outreach work. Most recently, the United Kingdom has assisted the Special Representative of the Ratifiers of the Treaty, ambassador Ramaker, with his programme of visits.

Defence Attache

Mr. Walter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which UK embassies in EU capitals had a permanent defence attaché on 1 June *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2004; and what plans he has to alter the levels of representation. [204870]

Mr. MacShane: In 1997 and 2001, British embassies in 13 EU capitals (listed as follows) had a permanent defence attaché with one non-resident accreditation (NRA): Rome, Bonn, Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, Athens, Helsinki, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Dublin, The Hague, Brussels (Luxembourg was a Non-resident accreditation (NRA) from Brussels).

As of 1 June 2004, following the expansion of the European Union, there are 22 permanent defence attachés with two non-resident accreditations: Brussels, Berlin, Paris, Warsaw, Ljubljana, Prague, Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, Vilnius, Riga, Athens, Budapest, Valletta, Nicosia, Rome, Dublin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Stockholm, The Hague, Bratislava, Luxembourg (NRA), Tallinn (NRA). Brussels was transferred to NRA status on 24 June 2004.

We keep the defence attaché representation under constant review. There are no immediate plans to alter the level of representation in EU capitals.

Estonian Minister of Defence (Robbery)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* NATO and *(b)* EU documents were among those stolen from the home of the Estonian Minister of Defence; and if he will make a statement. [204465]

Mr. MacShane: We understand that the Estonian authorities have completed an investigation and have confirmed that there were no EU or NATO documents in the briefcase stolen from the house of the former Estonian Defence Minister.

EU Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much EU funding was allocated to the European Information Association in the last period for which figures are available. [204076]

Mr. MacShane: Information on EU funding can be obtained from EU offices: European Commission Representation in the UK, 8 Storey's Gate, London, SW1P 3AT, Telephone: 020 79731992. The European

Information Association (EIA) is a non-profit making organisation with charitable status which has no links to the British Government.

European Commission

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) on how many occasions the European Commission has used articles *(a)* 94, *(b)* 95 and *(c)* 308 TEC as the legal basis for proposals over each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement; [204224]

(2) if he will list those items of legislation brought in under TEC articles *(a)* 94, *(b)* 95 and *(c)* 308 since May 1997; in how many of these cases the UK Government raised the question of appropriate treaty basis; and if he will make a statement. [204457]

Mr. MacShane: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In assessing the legal basis of proposals brought forward by the Commission, the Government follows tests laid down by the Court of Justice in case law dating back to the 1980s and considers the proposal as a whole, and in particular its aim and content.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the use of articles in the draft EU Constitution as a treaty base for *(a)* legislation and *(b)* legal proceedings by (i) the Commission, (ii) the European Parliament and (iii) the European Court of Justice; if he will list those occasions when articles of the draft Constitution have been cited as legal basis for legislation or legal proceedings; and what his policy is towards the citation of such articles. [204460]

Mr. MacShane: None. The EU Constitutional Treaty has not yet come into force.

European Neighbourhood Policy

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his European Union counterparts on the negotiation of a new agreement with Israel under the European Neighbourhood Policy; and if he will make a statement. [204767]

Mr. MacShane: EU Foreign Ministers last held discussions on the negotiation of the first wave European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans, including the Israel Action Plan, at the 11 October General Affairs and External Relations Council. I represented my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on that occasion. The Israel Action Plan was approved at the 13 December General Affairs and External Relations Council. We believe that engaging with Israel on the basis of shared, common values will be beneficial to the EU-Israel relationship.

European Union

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list activities in which his Department has been involved to promote the benefits of the Government's policy towards the European Union in the last 12 months; what the costs were; what partner organisations were involved; and if he will make a statement. [204226]

Mr. MacShane: The Government works with a wide range of partners to develop and communicate its policy towards the European Union, including OGDs, the CBI, Chambers of Commerce, trades unions and more, including other EU member states and EU institutions.

Between November 2003 and the end of October 2004 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was involved in over 70 events to raise awareness of the effects for the UK of membership of the European Union. Some of these events were arranged by or had input from the FCO, and FCO publications were distributed at others. A full list is available on the FCO website:

www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1051607819365&a=Page and

www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029392745.

These activities, as well as a range of publications and media relations activity, were funded from an annual EU Communications budget of £200,000.

Speakers at these events have included Ministers from several Government Departments and the devolved Administrations, while other participants have ranged from local councillors to war veterans and professional sportsmen.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which EU budget lines may be used for information campaigns; how much was allocated under each line for the present year; which projects under each line have operated in the United Kingdom within the past 24 months; and which projects he intends to support within the United Kingdom as part of *(a)* the EU Constitution debate and *(b)* campaigns to explain the benefits of EU membership. [204227]

Mr. MacShane: There are six EU budget lines which may be used for information campaigns.

The provision made for payments under each line for the present year (2004) was:

	Million euros
1. Space of liberty, security and justice	2
2. Economic and monetary union including the euro	3.5
3. Enlargement	19
4. Debate on the Future of the European Union	10
5. Role of the European Union in the world	2.5
6. Aid Co-operation (AIDCO)	1.5

In the last 24 months the only two of these programmes that have operated in the UK are Enlargement and Debate on the Future of the European Union. Plans have not yet been made on projects within the UK to support the EU Constitution debate or to explain the benefits of EU membership.

Freedom of Information Act

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205048]

Mr. Straw: Staffing of the central team dealing with both Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998 issues in each of the years requested is as follows:

	Number
2001	3
2002	6
2003	7
2004	10

No change to the level of central staffing is planned for 2005 and 2006, but requirements will be kept under review.

Indian Nagaland Insurgents

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and *(a)* India and *(b)* Bhutan regarding Indian Nagaland insurgents. [204474]

Mr. Alexander: The UK Government have not had discussions about the Nagaland insurgents with the Government of India or the Government of Bhutan.

However the British High Commission in India continues to monitor developments in Nagaland. A ceasefire remains in place and this has led to a significant improvement in the security situation. A tragic bombing incident took place in Dimapur in early October, which we have strongly condemned. Although the culprits are yet to be identified, local observers believe that the incident was perpetrated by outsiders and does not signal a general return to violence. Discussions are proceeding between the Government of India and one of the major militant factions on a political resolution of the conflict. The British High Commissioner visited Nagaland from 13–15 November to update himself on developments.

Internal Disciplinary Hearings

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions European Union personnel have been subject to internal disciplinary hearings in each year since 1995; what complaint was made in each case; which cases involved incidents of whistleblowing; what the result of the hearing was in each case; if he will list the individuals involved; and if he will make a statement. [204091]

Mr. MacShane: European Union personnel are employed by a number of bodies, each of which has its own disciplinary procedures. The information requested is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Iran

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with the Iranian Government regarding *(a)* Hezbollah and *(b)* Hamas. [203842]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Inverclyde (David Cairns) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1057W.

Israel

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when *(a)* the EU-Israel Association Council and *(b)* the EU-Israel Association Committee last met; what conclusions were arrived at; and when they are next scheduled to meet. [204770]

Mr. MacShane: The EU-Israel Association Council last met on 13 December whilst the EU-Israel Association Committee met on 9 July 2003.

The main conclusion from the last Association Council was the agreement of technical arrangements on the labelling of goods from Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories. Under the arrangements, Israeli goods exported to the EU will be labelled with the name of the city, village or industrial zone of production, allowing EU customs to distinguish between products obtained within and beyond the Green line—and to refuse preferential treatment if the products are obtained beyond the Green line. The Association Council also concluded the need for both the Israelis and the Palestinians to continue to engage constructively in a political process and to demonstrate the necessary leadership to revive the Middle East Peace Process.

At the 2003 EU-Israel Association Committee, the EU and Israel had an extensive dialogue on political issues of common interest, including a review of developments in the Peace Process, the fight against terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, ratification of non-proliferation Treaties as well as regional issues.

No dates have been set for the next EU-Israel Association Council and Committee, but we expect that they will take place during the course of 2005.

Israel (Security Wall)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Israeli Government on the security wall. [203391]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, South-East (Dr. Iddon) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1520.

Israel (Settlements)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussion his Department has had with the Israeli Government on the future of Israeli settlements. [204392]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 15 December 2004]*: We have discussed with Israel the issue of the future of the Israeli settlement infrastructure to be evacuated in the disengagement plan. We have stressed the importance of leaving intact as much of the useable infrastructure as possible.

We welcome the Israeli disengagement plan to withdraw all settlements from Gaza and four from the West Bank. We hope that this withdrawal will be as full as possible, and a first step towards meeting their Roadmap commitments rather than an end in itself.

Settlements are illegal under international law and freezing settlement expansion as well as dismantling outposts erected since 2001 forms part of Israel's commitments under Phase One of the Roadmap. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made this clear during his visit to Israel on 24 November.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202393]

Mr. Straw: The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

I have no plans to establish a public register.

Oil and Gas Supplies

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the situation in Ukraine on *(a)* oil and *(b)* gas supplies to (i) the UK and (ii) the EU; and if he will make a statement; [204380]

(2) what steps the Government are taking to protect the supply of *(a)* oil and *(b)* gas to the UK via transit pipelines passing through Ukraine; [204381]

(3) what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Ukrainian Government and *(b)* the Russian Government about the protection of oil and gas transit routes that pass through Ukraine from interruption to flow during the current political situation in Ukraine. [204383]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: While we recognise the importance of Ukraine for the transit of oil and gas, we have no evidence that the current situation in Ukraine is having an impact on oil and gas supplies to the UK and to the EU. It is not possible in any event to determine what percentage of UK physical oil and gas supplies has transited Ukraine, but it is believed to be negligible. It is the responsibility of the authorities in producing and transit countries to ensure that energy supplies, which are contracted for by private companies, can be delivered without impediment. We keep the situation in Ukraine under careful review. Were there to be cause for concern over energy supplies transiting Ukraine we would, with our EU partners, raise the matter urgently with the authorities there, and, if applicable, with the Russian Government.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the President of Pakistan on that country's laws of blasphemy. [204528]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did not discuss Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws with President Musharraf during his recent visit to the UK.

The Pakistani authorities however are aware of the serious view that the British Government takes of all incidents of persecution and other forms of religious intolerance and discrimination in Pakistan.

Together with our EU partners we have raised our concerns on these issues with the Pakistani authorities on a number of occasions, most recently in May this year.

Somalia

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of recent reports of violent clashes in the Mudug region and in Hobyo town in Somalia; what his most recent estimate of the number of people affected by the violence is; and if he will make a statement. [204641]

Mr. Mullin: We see regular reports of fighting in the Mudug and other regions of Somalia and of heavy casualties. We have no representation in Somalia and are not able to make an independent assessment of these reports. But we are urging all factions to support the peace process. We are working closely with the international community to bring about the creation of a Transitional Federal Government for Somalia, acceptable to all factions, which can establish itself in Mogadishu and begin to restore peace and security throughout Somalia.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the commercial operations of the Hawiye clan in Somalia since 1997 and *(b)* the Hawiye clan's contribution to and role in the situation in Somalia; and if he will make a statement. [204642]

Mr. Mullin: We have no representation in Somalia and are not able to make an independent assessment of the activities of the Hawiye clan. But we are urging all factions to support the peace process.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* political, *(b)* social and *(c)* economic situation in Somaliland; and if he will make a statement. [204643]

Mr. Mullin: Somaliland has escaped much of the conflict in the rest of Somalia recently. 'President' Rayale was elected democratically in May 2003. Internal reconciliation has made progress. Civil society is beginning to find a voice and the press is relatively free. Economic conditions remain extremely difficult as Somaliland's livestock exports to Arabian countries are prohibited following an outbreak of Rift Valley fever. We have urged the Somaliland authorities to talk to the Transitional Federal Government in the south, when it becomes established, and to agree a mutually acceptable future relationship. I visited Somaliland between 23–25 October this year.

West Papua

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in the province of West Papua, Indonesia. [204766]

Mr. Alexander: We have raised the question of human rights in Papua with the Indonesian Government, most recently during the visit by Dr. Michael Williams, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's Special Advisor, to Indonesia in December 2004. We believe the new Government is actively seeking to resolve the conflict. We are aware of reports of human rights abuses in Papua. We will continue to monitor the situation.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Paramilitaries

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 925–26W, on offences, how many of the 48 cases referred to involved members of the Provisional IRA; and of the eight cases resulting in freezing and recovery of assets, how many were linked to the *(a)* Provisional IRA, *(b)* INLA, *(c)* UDA and *(d)* UVF. [205530]

Mr. Pearson: The Assets recovery Agency does not hold information on individual affiliation. Of the 48 cases which have been referred to it since February 2003, the agency perceives that 13 cases can be identified as being from the Loyalist community and 12 cases can be perceived as being from the Republican community.

It is not appropriate for the Government to comment on the affiliation of individuals whose assets have been frozen and are under active investigation by the agency.

Retired Prison Officers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of introducing authorisation cards for retired prison officers that indicate their former occupation, similar to those held by retired police officers. [205529]

Mr. Pearson: The introduction of authorisation cards for former prison officers has not been raised as an issue with the Northern Ireland Prison Service by former staff or other agencies who may have an interest. Consequently no assessment of the merits of such a scheme has been made to date.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203498]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Claims Direct

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will publish correspondence sent by Mr. Peter Ross to her Department in January 2000, relating to Claims Direct. [199746]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold any correspondence meeting the description in your question so the question of publication does not arise.

Correspondence

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the letters of 11 May, 13 July and 13 September from the hon. Member for Canterbury, regarding the UK's involvement in the European Space Agency's Aurora Mars Exploration Programme. [204330]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* I am extremely sorry for the delay in responding to these letters.

I understand that my noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Science and Innovation, responded to the hon. Member on 16 December.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years.

Ms Hewitt: The following number of DTI files have been destroyed in each of the past five years.

	Number
1999–2000	52,605
2000–01	73,815
2001–02	71,260
2002–03	64,820
2003–04	97,020

DTI operates a centralised system of reviewing records. Records have a first review when they are between eight to 10-years-old. The files are examined to establish if they should be retained for departmental administrative purposes or whether they have any potential historical value. Approximately 85 per cent. of DTI files are destroyed at first review. Files that are retained are then selected for a second review when they are 25-years-old. They are re-examined to establish

whether they have any continuing administrative value or should be transferred to The National Archives (TNA) for permanent preservation. Approximately 2 per cent. of DTI files are sent to TNA. Public records cannot be retained for longer than 30 years without the permission of the Lord Chancellor.

Energy Prices

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps she is taking to minimise the effects of rising energy prices on the Scottish economy; and if she will make a statement; [203398]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to mitigate the impact of rising energy prices on the manufacturing sector of Scottish industry. [203399]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Ofgem has now announced its conclusions on its investigation into gas price increases in 2003 and 2004. It has concluded that the main causes of rising UK gas prices are high oil prices feeding into gas prices and declining UK gas supplies. Ofgem is taking two courses of action. It is asking the European Commission to put more resources into making gas competition work, and is continuing to examine why some UK gas supplies did not reach the market.

While the cost of gas to industry has been rising recently, this should be seen in the context of historical trends. In real terms gas prices for industrial users in 2003 were nearly 30 per cent. below their level in 1990 and well below their average over the last 30 years.

Electricity prices have increased mainly as a result of the rise in gas prices and the recovery in wholesale prices from unsustainably low levels in 2002. Industrial electricity prices in 2003 were nearly 50 per cent. below their 1990 levels. Even after the latest increases we expect prices to remain competitive with those of our major EU competitors.

The Department has recently published a report by Oxford Economic Research Associates which concluded that the UK has the most competitive energy markets in Europe. The report is available at:

www.dti.gov.uk/energy/gas_and_electricity/competitiveness_structure/psa_final.pdf

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the impact of rising energy prices on the competitiveness of Scottish industry. [203400]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department is watching with care the impact of rising energy prices on British manufacturing. Ministers and officials have met with industry groups and companies to address their concerns in this area.

The increases are in the main a result of market forces and follow a period in which energy prices have generally been at historically low levels in real terms. The UK has the most competitive energy market in the EU and industrial electricity and gas prices have been among the lowest in the EU until recently.

EU Legislation

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to her Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [202384]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 4 March 2002, *Official Report*, column 2W.

External Consultants

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total external spending by her Department was on public-private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by her Department over this period; and if she will make a statement. [202388]

Ms Hewitt: The Department employed advisers to consider options for private sector participation in BNFL as part of a wider joint strategy review and its subsequent implementation. The team was made up of a mixture of permanent staff and consultants and, as such, the work carried out was not billed separately and cannot be separated from the total figures. The work was carried out between April and December 2004. The total cost for the whole project was £2.8 million and a total of three consultancy firms were used in the full study.

Fireworks

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firework-related *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* injuries occurred in England in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004. [204061]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In answer to *(a)*, during 2002 and 2003 there were no fatalities in the UK as a result of the use of fireworks. The injury statistics for the fireworks season are published annually and I expect the figures for 2004 to be published some time in March. However, I have not been made aware of any fatalities during the 2004 period.

With regard to *(b)*, during 2002 and in England there were a total of 833 injuries. In 2003 there were 974. Again, with regard to the figures for 2004, a comparative figure for this period is not yet available for the UK.

Manufacturing (Government Support)

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on Government support for manufacturing in *(a)* the West Midlands, *(b)* Birmingham and *(c)* Hodge Hill since 2001; and what support will be available over the next three years. [204184]

Jacqui Smith: Manufacturing in the region is a complex picture with DTI and its partners providing a wide range of support. In 2002 the regional development agency for the West Midlands, Advantage West Midlands (AWM), produced a strategy for manufacturing, aimed at modernising skills and the

various supply chains within the region to help its long-term future. Some initiatives we are supporting to take forward this strategy are:

Giving £37 million towards the setting up of an International Automotive Research Centre in partnership with Ford's Premier Automotive Group and Warwick University. This will focus on improving engineering skills and technology transfer between OEMs and academia to the region's automotive suppliers.

As part of AWM's Modernisation Programme, the 'Accelerate' Programme, with support from Europe, offers further help to automotive suppliers in the region. Up until 2003, over 1,500 companies have been assisted with advice on production efficiencies and best practice resulting in over 16,000 jobs being created and safeguarded. 16 companies in the Hodge Hill constituency are currently participating in the programme.

AWM's diversification programme also helps companies with new product development, improving business processes, supporting start-ups and improving access to finance. Its initial target to assist 800 businesses in the region by March 2005 has already been exceeded.

As part of the DTI-supported SMMT "Industry Forum", the "Automotive Academy" has been established, as a national £15 million initiative, aimed at enhancing skills, productivity and competitiveness of the UK motor industry. It has a delivery hub in the West Midlands, complementing the work of the Accelerate Programme.

The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) is one often in the country, jointly funded by DTI and, in the West Midlands, AWM and launched in 2002. Based in Wolverhampton, it has assisted over 900 businesses so far (against a three year target of 1,050) including 31 in the Hodge Hill constituency. As a result, over 70 per cent. of businesses invested money on improving their businesses. Nationally, manufacturing has been boosted by over £53 million as a result of MAS activities with an average of £100,000 added value to each participating manufacturer.

Capital investment support to industry in the Assisted Areas of the region is also given through the DTI's Selective Financial Investment in England (SFIE)—formerly RSA—scheme. Since 2001, 114 offers of grant worth £46 million have been made. Of these, 28 offers worth £19.4 million have been made to companies in Birmingham, helping to create 1,268.5 new jobs and safeguard 1,816.5. Included is Frenco International Ltd. in Kitts Green, which received a £95,000 grant in 2004 towards investment supporting the creation of six new jobs and the safeguarding of a further three. In addition, LDV in Washwood Heath is receiving £15 million in grant to support the manufacture of a brand new van.

Although it is not possible to provide a figure for funding that will be available over the next three years, manufacturing remains an important part of the West Midlands industrial landscape, which is recognised in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), which AWM and its partners will continue to actively deliver against over the next three years. This will include the continuation of some of the successful initiatives as detailed.

Medicines (Packaging)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the pharmaceutical industry on the effects of medicines supplied to patients in the UK being provided in tamper-proof and patient-safe packaging. [201722]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) undertook a full public consultation in advance of the introduction of the Medicines (Child Safety) Regulations 2003, which enabled implementation of a new national standard for packaging aimed at reducing child poisonings. The MHRA also had discussion with representatives of the pharmaceutical industry and other interested parties about implementation of the standard, including a guideline to assist the industry in its implementation. Tamper-evident packaging is not required, nor prohibited, in law. The MHRA, however, monitors initiatives in medicines packaging to keep abreast of industry developments in this area. Tamper-evident packaging is one of many such areas that the MHRA has heard presentations on.

Minimum Wage

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will raise the minimum wage to the level recommended by the TUC. [205439]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As you may know, the minimum wage rates are set by the Government based on the recommendations of the independent Low Pay Commission, which consists of representatives from a range of employee, employer and academic backgrounds. The commission is presently carrying out an extensive consultation and fact finding exercise with employers, unions and others and will then consider the issues very carefully before putting forward recommendations to the Government in February 2005. As part of their remit the commission have been asked to review levels of each of the different minimum wage rates and make recommendations, if appropriate, for change.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what ministerial visits are planned for each Minister in her Department in the next six months; and if she will make a statement. [201277]

Ms Hewitt: My ministerial colleagues and I will undertake a broad range of visits over the next six months. It is not possible to provide the detailed information requested as it can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Industry

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had with the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate on safety concerns in relation to British Energy's advanced gas-cooled nuclear reactors. [204783]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I meet with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Nuclear Installations Inspectorate from time to time to discuss various issues concerning regulation of safety in the nuclear industry, including advanced gas-cooled reactors. I last met him on 20 October 2004.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what targets will be set for the National Decommissioning Authority; and what its budget will be for the first year of operation. [204828]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: From 1 April 2005, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) will focus on the clean-up of the UK's civil public sector nuclear legacy in

a safe, secure, and cost-effective manner. The NDA's draft Annual Plan (available on its website) sets out what the NDA intends to achieve in its first year of operation at each of its sites. This work will contribute to the achievement of the Government's Public Service Agreement for the NDA which is to: reduce the civil nuclear liability by 10 per cent. by 2010; establish a safe, innovative and dynamic market for nuclear clean-up; deliver annual 2 per cent. efficiency gains from 2006–07; and, ensure successful competitions have been completed for the management of at least 50 per cent. of UK nuclear sites by end 2008. Work is now under way to set the more detailed key performance indicators and milestones that will allow my Department to be assured that the NDA is making progress against these targets. The NDA's budget for 2005–06 will be £2.2 billion.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what target her Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by her Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202556]

Ms Hewitt: I, and my team of Ministers aim to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their named day question on the named day and also endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately this is not always possible but this Department makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

The following shows the percentage of questions answered within these timescales since the last General Election.

	Named day questions	*Ordinary written questions*
2001–02	39	78
2002–03	34	80
2003–04	35	76

Post Office Card Accounts

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people with Post Office card accounts in receipt of the state pension have had a red flag placed on their accounts preventing access in each of the last 12 months. [204748]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The administration of the Post office card account is a commercial matter for Post Office Ltd. I understand from the company that term 'red flag' is not one that they use with regard to the Post Office card account. If the term refers to instances where the provision of the card account service has been withdrawn then no accounts have been flagged in this way in the last 12 months.

Post Offices

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices there are in the UK. [205297]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As at 30 September 2004, the latest date for which quarterly statistics are available, there were 15,304 post offices in the UK.

Science Funding

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding was provided by her Department for science in *(a)* the West Midlands, *(b)* Birmingham and *(c)* Hodge Hill since 2001; and what support will be made available in the next three years. [204183]

Jacqui Smith: The DTI provides support for a wide range of activities to help develop science and technology in the UK and facilitate its transfer to companies to help them improve their competitiveness. Since 1997 the national science budget has more than doubled and will reach £3.3 billion by 2007–08. In addition, a further £205 million has been earmarked nationally to drive forward the DTI's technology strategy. Funds from both streams will help bring major benefits to companies in the West Midlands. This is a key priority for the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands and its partners and some of the larger examples of work with the regions' universities and other organisations to take forward these aims are as follows:

In the Wolverhampton and Telford High Technology Corridor, over £2.5 million is being spent to assess companies' needs in the polymers industry and to help clustering activities

In the same Technology Corridor, nearly £2 million is supporting activity in the Advanced Engineering cluster

Also in this Technology Corridor, £7 million is supporting a pioneering scheme with the University of Wolverhampton to provide start-up and grow-on space for high technology companies in e-commerce and e-engineering

Birmingham University is receiving £2.8 million to develop equipment to establish a Visualisation and 3D Imaging network

It is also receiving £2.5 million to develop a centre of Computational Intelligence and Applications in an area where the region has been slow to pick up and apply this leading technology

The Premium Automotive Research and Development Programme, based at Warwick University is receiving £32 million to help automotive suppliers in the region accelerate their competitive capabilities

Keele University is managing a £12.7 million scheme, including £1.4 million from AWM, to provide high spec innovation centres in medical technologies

Aston University is receiving nearly £4 million to provide a national and European Centre of Excellence in clinical science and medical technology, an area where the West Midlands has a significant presence.

Travel Costs

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total travel costs to her Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203776]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Agricultural Students

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Department's strategy is towards encouraging entrants to agricultural colleges and university agricultural departments for *(a)* farm-based courses and *(b)* non-farm-based rural courses. [204435]

Dr. Howells: It is a matter for prospective learners themselves to make course choices that match their achievements to date, interests and aspirations; and for providers of further and higher education to determine what courses they offer. However, the Department supports a number of developments helping those involved with, or considering, land-based education and training provision.

These developments include:

a review of further education land-based provision commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which looked at patterns of course availability and how the sector is changing in response to market demand;

support for Foundation Degrees (of the available places for 2004/06, over 200 places were allocated to the agriculture and forestry area);

development by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector—with industry—of a careers and recruitment strategy which will help to ensure that there is accurate information about careers, courses and providers within the sector. Lantra continues to work with awarding bodies and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to ensure that the provision of land-based qualifications are fit for purpose and based on industry-derived national occupational standards;

provision by the Department of impartial careers information to young people through publications (such as "Working in Agriculture and Horticulture" and web-based products (such as the "jobs4u" database) describing what it is like to work in the land-based sector and giving information on relevant qualifications and skills.

In addition, the Department helps support rural learners to engage with FE and HE learning. For example, Aimhigher Partnerships covering rural areas provide targeted support, such as meeting transport costs to enable schools in remote areas to engage in outreach activities with higher education institutions and exploring access routes to HE for those from rural communities. The LSC National Office monitors a range of local LSC initiatives to engage rural learners, including ones promoting access to Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [200827]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for its staff and supports a range of childcare provision which help staff balance family and working life. We are currently reviewing childcare provision and considering how salary sacrifice can allow staff access to further childcare support.

Jointly with DWP, workplace nurseries provide 100 places for staff working in Sheffield and Runcorn. In addition playschemes operate during the school holidays for children in full-time education and are available for staff working in Sheffield, Runcorn, Darlington and London.

My Department also provides childcare nursery vouchers to staff working in London, Sheffield, Darlington and Runcorn for children aged 0 to 4 years.

In 2003/04 the provision was used by 321 children at a cost of £307,204.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many extra 16 to 18 years olds he expects to remain in education as a result of education maintenance allowances in *(a)* Gloucestershire and *(b)* South West England. [204907]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since the start of the academic year, as of 30 November 2004, 1,802 young people in Gloucestershire Local Authority area have received payments under the national EMA scheme. The number is increasing at a steady rate and we expect it to continue to do so. In 2004/05 across England we expect the number of 16 to 18 year olds participating in education to increase by 35,000 (3.8 percentage points) as a direct result of EMA. By 2006/07, when EMA is available to all eligible 16 to 18 year olds, an additional 72,000 young people will be in further education. If the same participation increase is applied to the South West region an additional 7,200 16 to 18 year olds will be participating in further education by 2006/07. Estimates are not available at Local Authority level.

Employer Training Pilots

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the experience of Employer Training Pilots and its application to the national scheme roll-out. [204496]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) were launched in September 2002 to test new ways of encouraging employers to offer training, especially for their lower skilled employees. The pilots, which now cover around one third of England, have benefited over 100,000 learners, most of whom left school before the age of 16 and around 15,000 employers, of which 70 per cent. had less than 50 employees. ETPs have also been effective in encouraging more colleges and providers to deliver training on employers' premises, at a time and in a manner suited to the shift patterns of their staff.

The pilots have been independently evaluated by the Institute for Employment Studies and have also been the subject of a review by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Both of these point to their overwhelming success and the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the PBR, the Government's intention to launch a new national employer training programme in 2006/07. The new programme will draw on the lessons learned from ETP and will incorporate key elements of the pilots including:

free or heavily subsidised training for employees to help them overcome basic skills needs and/or to achieve their first level 2 qualification;

a similar level of support towards the cost of a level 3 qualification for those employees who can jump straight to a level 3;

brokerage to help employers identify providers who are able to deliver the training they need flexibly in the workplace, to help them locate other sources of funding for which they may qualify and to encourage them to finance other elements of training themselves;

information and advice to learners in respect of their further development.

The new programme will cover the whole of England from 2007/08.

Education Funding

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the real terms change in the amount of central Government funding allocated to Leicestershire education authority has been since 1997. [204737]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Since 1997, per pupil funding for pupils aged 3–19 rose by £710 in real terms from £2,670 per pupil to £3,380 per pupil—an increase of 26 per cent. This includes funding via Education Formula Spending/Standard Spending Assessment and grants allocated at an LEA level, and excludes the pensions transfer to EPS and the Learning and Skills Council.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the spend per head has been on primary school pupils in Leicestershire in each academic year since 1997–98. [204747]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Local education authority expenditure data is collected by financial year. The information is contained within the following table:

Expenditure per primary[1] pupil in Leicestershire LEA since 1997–98[2]

£

	Primary education[1]		*Pre-Primary and Primary education[1]*	
	School based expenditure[3, 4] per pupil[6]	*Combined LEA and school based expenditure[5] per pupil[6]*	*School based expenditure[3, 4] per pupil*	*Combined LEA and school based expenditure[5] per pupil[6]*
1997–98[7]	n/a	n/a	1,660	1,790
1998–99[7]	n/a	n/a	1,810	1,990
1999–00[8]	1,930	2,070	2,000	2,140
2000–01	2,080	2,220	2,160	2,300
2001–02	2,260	2,420	2,420	2,590
2002–03[4, 9]	2,190	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = Not available.

[1] Expenditure was not distinguished between the pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of Section 52 for financial year 1999–2000.

[2] 1999–2000 saw a change in data source when the data collection moved from the RO1 form collected by the ODPM to the Section 52 form from the DfES. 2002–03 saw a further break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) and the associated restructuring of the outturn tables. The change in sources is shown by the dotted line.

[3] School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by the schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school-based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates. This excludes the central cost of support services such as home to school transport, local authority administration and the financing of capital expenditure.

[4] The 2002–03 school based expenditure calculation is broadly similar to the calculation in previous years. However, 2001–02 and earlier years includes all premature retirement compensation (PRC) and Crombie payments, mandatory PRC payments and other indirect employee expenses, while in 2002–03 only the schools element of these categories is included. In 2001–02 this accounted for approximately £70 per pupil of the England total, while the schools element of these categories accounted for approximately £50 per pupil of the England total in 2002–03. Also, for some LEAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors was reported within the LEA part of the form in 2002–03 and would therefore be excluded, though this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

[5] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA). A sector breakdown for combined LEA and school based expenditure is not available in 2002–03.

[6] Pupil numbers include only those pupils attending maintained establishments within the primary and pre-primary sectors and are drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census. For 1999–2000 onwards, the combined LEA and school based expenditure for pre-primary also includes private voluntary independent (PVI) under five pupil numbers drawn from the Early Years Census. All pupil numbers are adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[7] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central Government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99.

[8] The 1999–2000 figures reflect the return of grant maintained schools to local authority maintenance.

[9] School based expenditure in nursery schools was not recorded in 2002–03.

Note: Figures are reported in cash terms and rounded to the nearest £10 as reported by the LEA.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent on (*a*) pre-schools (*b*) primary schools and (*c*) secondary schools in the London Borough of Southwark in each year since 1996–97; and how much was spent by the London Borough of Southwark from locally-generated revenue in each case. [205544]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department funds Local Education Authorities and it is for them to decide how that funding is allocated within their area. Information relating to the spending on pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in Southwark Education Authority is provided in the table Locally generated revenue data is not collected by my Department.

Combined LEA and school based net expenditure[1] by Southwark LEA 1996–97 to 2002–03[2]

£

	Pre-primary education[3]	*Primary education*[3]	*Pre-primary and Primary education*[3]	*Secondary education*	*Overall LEA and school based expenditure*
1996–97	[6]	[6]	57,031,000	25,076,000	107,868,000
1997–98[4]	[6]	[6]	58,366,000	24,081,000	110,372,000
1998–99[4]	[6]	[6]	61,397,000	27,151,000	117,307,000
1999–2000[4]	4,256,000	71,167,000	75,423,000	39,843,000	133,853,000
2000–01	5,427,000	75,595,000	81,022,000	41,101,000	136,564,000
2001–02	2,999,000	94,595,000	97,593,000	58,621,000	171,473,000
2002–03[1,5]	[6]	[6]	[6]	[6]	168,094,000

[1] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of childreñ in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA). A sector breakdown for combined LEA and school based expenditure is not available in 2002–03 due to the redesign of the Section 52 Outturn Table A where central LEA expenditure is no longer split by phase.

[2] 1999–2000 saw a change in data source when the data collection moved from the RO1 form collected by the ODPM to the Section 52 form from the DfES. 2002–03 saw a further break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) and the associated restructuring of the outturn tables. The change in sources is shown by the dotted line.

[3] Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of Section 52 for financial year 1999–2000.

[4] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99. The 1999–00 figures reflect the return of GM schools to local authority maintenance.

[5] In 2002–03 Southwark LEA were one of a group of LEAs whose net current expenditure was lower than expected. It is suspected that this was caused by the misreporting of funding in the income column of their 2002–03 Outturn Statement Table A.

[6] Not available

Note:

Figures reported in cash terms are rounded to the nearest £1,000 as reported by the LEA.

Exeter University

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on his policy on the future of the chemistry, music and Italian departments at Exeter University. [203656]

Dr. Howells: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. Exeter University have set out their plans for the subjects mentioned.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has asked the Higher Education Funding Council of England for advise on subjects or courses of national strategic importance, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them.

Higher Education

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils from the Bassetlaw constituency have entered higher education in each of the last 30 years. [201092]

Dr. Howells: The available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. Information on the parliamentary constituency domicile of a student is derived from the students' postcode.

18 year old undergraduate entrants to UK HE institutions from Bassetlaw constituency

Academic year	*Entrants*
1997/98[1]	175
1998/99	190
1999/00	180
2000/01	170
2001/02	190
2002/03	185

[1] Figures for 1997–98 do not include entrants at the Open University as these can not be identified on the dataset.

Notes:

1. Figures are based upon a snapshot as at 1 December for 18 year olds who have a known postcode. In each year, a small number of UK domiciled students did not have a valid postcode.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on recent developments in the progression of young people from apprenticeships into higher education. [204500]

Dr. Howells: Details of entry qualifications of entrants to HE are collected annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) but students with Apprenticeships are not identified separately.

We are committed to strengthening the links between HE and Apprenticeship, and the Advanced Apprenticeship now includes a technical certificate to

support that progression. In addition we are exploring best practice in supporting Advanced Apprentices into higher education in eight sectors. The expansion of Foundation Degrees is another way that apprentices can access higher education opportunities.

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged 18 years entered higher education in the academic year 2004/05 who were resident in *(a)* the City of Manchester and *(b)* Manchester, Withington constituency. [201926]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The latest available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. Information on the parliamentary constituency of a student is derived from the students' postcode.

18 year old undergraduate entrants from Manchester Withington constituency and the City of Manchester, 2002/03

Domicile	*Entrants*
Manchester, Withington	190
City of Manchester[1]	600

[1] Defined as those students domiciled in the constituencies: Manchester Blackley, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton and Manchester Withington.

Note:
Figures are based upon a snapshot as at 1 December for 18 year olds who have a known postcode. In 2002/03, 2 per cent. of UK domiciled students did not have a valid postcode. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record.

Key Stage Results

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Edueation and Skills what proportion of pupils at each Key Stage achieved the standard expected of *(a)* pupils of their age, *(b)* pupils at each year below their age and *(c)* pupils at each year above their age in (i) reading/English and (ii) mathematics in each year since 1997. [204338]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* The percentages of Key Stage 1 pupils achieving *(a)* the expected level, *(b)* below the expected level and *(c)* above the expected level for 7-year-olds (Level 2) in reading, writing and mathematics for 1997–2004 are as follows:

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
(a) At Level 2								
Reading	54	54	52	55	55	54	56	56
Writing	74	74	75	76	76	76	65	66
Maths	63	65	65	64	63	59	61	62
(b) Below Level 2								
Reading	20	20	18	17	16	16	16	17
Writing	20	19	17	16	14	15	19	18
Maths	17	16	13	10	9	10	10	10
(c) Above Level 2								
Reading	26	26	29	28	29	30	28	29
Writing	6	7	8	9	9	9	16	16
Maths	20	19	21	25	28	31	29	28

The percentages of Key Stage 2 pupils achieving *(a)* the expected level, *(b)* below the expected level and *(c)* above the expected level for 11-year-olds (Level 4) in reading, writing, English and mathematics for 1997–2004 are as follows:

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004 (revised)*
(a) At Level 4								
English	48	48	48	46	46	46	48	50
Reading	47	48	47	41	40	42	39	44
Writing	40	40	41	42	43	43	45	47
Maths	44	42	45	47	45	46	44	43
(b) Below Level 4								
English	33	32	27	23	23	23	23	21
Reading	26	26	20	15	17	19	17	16
Writing	39	44	44	43	41	39	38	36
Maths	35	38	29	26	27	25	26	25
(c) Above Level 4								
English	16	17	22	29	29	29	27	27
Reading	20	23	31	42	42	38	42	39
Writing	14	13	13	13	14	17	15	17
Maths	18	17	24	24	25	27	29	31

The percentages of Key Stage 3 pupils achieving *(a)* the expected level, *(b)* below the expected level and *(c)* above the expected level for 14-year-olds (Level 5) in English and mathematics for 1997–2004 are as follows:

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004 (provisional)*
(a) At Level 5								
English	33	30	36	35	32	33	34	37
Maths	23	24	24	24	24	22	22	21
(b) Below Level 5								
English	37	32	32	32	30	25	26	25
Maths	35	36	33	31	29	27	25	24
(c) Above Level 5								
English	25	35	28	29	32	32	35	34
Maths	37	36	38	41	43	45	49	52

Private Finance Initiative

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many private finance initiative and public private partnership contracts with his Department have been won by subsidiaries of Halliburton in each year since 1997; what the terms were of each contract; and if he will make a statement. [205080]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department does not have any private finance initiative or public private partnerships contracts which have been awarded to any subsidiaries of Halliburton.

School Internet Connections

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the London borough of Wandsworth are connected to the internet. [204740]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Over 99 per cent. of all schools in England had access to the internet from April 2002.

95 per cent. (54) of primary schools in Wandsworth had access to broadband as at October 2004.

100 per cent. (10) of secondary schools in Wandsworth had access to broadband as at October 2004.

School Places

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps an individual school must take in order to expand the number of places it makes available; and if he will list sources of *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital funding available to schools wishing to expand. [204188]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: If a school wishes to expand its physical capacity by 25 per cent., or by 27 places annually, it must consult interested parties in the area and then publish details of its proposals in a local newspaper. Following publication people can submit comments or objections. Proposals are decided by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or by an independent adjudicator if the SOC cannot decide unanimously. For popular and successful schools, there is a presumption that proposals for expansion should be approved so that as many parents as possible are able to gain a place for their children at the school. As set out in the Department's Five Year Strategy, we are currently consulting on a fast-track process for the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools.

For smaller scale expansions, the proposed increased admission number should be included in the annual consultation on the school's admission arrangements.

An LEA's recurrent funding formula is based predominately on pupil numbers on the school roll. As a school's roll increases in size, it will attract more funding under the local LEA's delegation formula; in turn, more pupils may also contribute towards a school receiving more devolved formula capital funding, Schools Standards Grant (SSG) and Standards Fund funding, as each of these resources can contain an element of "per pupil" funding within them.

If the school is a popular and successful secondary school it may apply direct to the Department for a contribution to the capital cost of building work—£500,000 if the school has a sixth form, £400,000 if not. If the balance of funding is not available from other sources, the Department may offer to fund the full expansion. These offers of funding are provisional on statutory proposals to expand being approved.

School Swimming

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) who has responsibility to ensure that the compulsory National Curriculum physical education requirement in respect of swimming is met by schools; and what the route of redress for pupils is if it is not; [204787]

(2) what progress has been made to improve swimming tuition at Key Stage 2 since the publication of the Swimming in Key Stage 2 Report by Ofsted in 2000; and if he will make a statement; [204788]

(3) how many school swimming pools in *(a)* Bedfordshire and *(b)* England have been removed since 1997. [204789]

Mr. Twigg: Section 79 of the Education Act 2002 puts a requirement on every LEA to ensure that all of the schools they maintain satisfy the requirements of the school curriculum (which includes the National Curriculum). A similar requirement to satisfy the requirements of the school curriculum is also placed, by the same section, on the governing body and head

teacher of every school. If any part of the requirement is not being met pupils should complain to their head teacher in the first instance. Complaints can be made to the local education authority and ultimately the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Our physical education, school sport and club links strategy, being implemented jointly with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, provides targeted support to enhance school swimming. Since the Ofsted report on Key Stage 2 Swimming was published in 2000, our swimming strategy has taken forward all of the key recommendations made by the Swimming Advisory Group. We have:

created a new swimming and water safety website which provides practical support for schools and swimming teachers;

carried out a pilot programme which tests out how best to support those children who reach the end of Key Stage 2 and are not able to swim 25 metres. Over 1000 pupils have benefited from the scheme; and

published a Swimming Charter in December 2003 which provides guidance and best practice examples to help schools overcome many of the challenges they face when planning and delivering swimming.

Furthermore, as part of its wider provision, the PE and School Sport National Professional Development Programme will help to improve the quality of swimming teaching throughout England. The Programme identifies where there is most need and provides specific professional development and support to help ensure high quality swimming tuition in schools.

A survey, carried out jointly by the Times Educational Supplement and the Central Council for Physical Recreation and published in August 2003, found that 84 per cent., or five in six, pupils are able to swim safely at least 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2.

This is a modest improvement on the position reported to us by Ofsted in 2000-when 80 per cent., or four in five pupils in England, achieved this target. We will be making an announcement shortly on future funding to support further school swimming.

Information relating to the removal of school swimming pools is not collected centrally.

Skills (Black/Minority Ethnic Communities)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he is taking to improve skills within black and minority ethnic communities. [204499]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The DfES, with its agencies and partners, seeks to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to all training opportunities. In addition we have developed a range of initiatives aimed specifically at improving the access and take-up of training within black and minority ethnic communities. That range is set out in our Race Equality Scheme, originally published in 2002, with an updated version scheduled for publication next summer. These include the work of the National Employer Panel, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, and the equivalent Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant.

Stapleford Park Reception

Mr. Collins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost was of the reception held by her Department in August at Stapleford Park in Leicestershire; on what basis the venue was selected; whether nearby venues were invited to tender; and if she will make a statement. [203801]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Leicestershire Learning and Skills Council held an event at Stapleford Park in August not the Department for Education and Skills. I have written to the head of Leicestershire Learning and Skills Council asking her to write to the hon. Member providing the information requested.

Student Finance

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills of each £1 the Government lend in student loans, what percentage is *(a)* repaid and *(b)* not repaid; and of *(b)*, what percentage is not repaid due to the interest subsidy on student loans. [204929]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State for Education and Skills only has responsibility for student loans paid to higher education students domiciled in England and Wales and this answer provides data relating to those students.

The percentage of loans issued that we forecast not to be repaid is around 5 per cent. for income contingent loans (the type of loan issued since 1998/99). The remaining percentage is expected to be repaid. The interest subsidy does not affect the repayment of the loan principal.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the projected expenditure is of the Student Loans Company on *(a)* income-contingent loans, *(b)* hardship loans and *(c)* mortgage loans for the academic years (i) 2001/02, (ii) 2002/03, (iii) 2003/04 and (iv) 2004/05. [204930]

Dr. Howells: Data on SLC cash expenditure for income-contingent loans, hardship loans and mortgage style loans are shown in the table. Data are for students normally domiciled in the United Kingdom. The data on income contingent and mortgage style loans are included in the Statistical First Release (SLC SFR 01/2004) issued on 30 November.

Expenditure by the Student Loans Company for UK domiciled students—academic years 2001/02 to 2004/05[1]

£ million

	Academic year			
	2001/02	*2002/03*	[1]*2003/04*	[1]*2004/05*
Income-contingent loans	2,455	2,617	2,705	[2]2,538
Mortgage style loans	35	9	2	[3]—
Hardship loans[4]	30	30	29	[3]—

[1] Provisional.

[2] Expenditure is based on the position as at 14 November 2004. This will increase as late applications are processed.

[3] Not available.

[4] Hardship loans have been discontinued in 2004/05 following changes to the statutory and discretionary support system, including the introduction of the higher education grant.

Teachers

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps have been taken since 1997 to recruit more male primary school teachers; and what the costs were of advertising and promotional campaigns to that end. [205055]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Since 1997, the main activity to increase overall numbers of male primary school teachers has been through the Teacher Training Agency's recruitment campaign. This includes targeting sections of the media with a predominantly male audience and encompasses advertising, public relations and other forms of marketing and promotional activity. Since 1999/2000, the earliest year for which figures are available, there has been a 36 per cent. increase in the number of male primary trainee teachers.

It is not possible to disaggregate the specific costs of campaigns aimed at attracting men into primary teaching.

Truancy (Penalty Notice)

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate she has made of the likely costs to agencies involved in administering an individual fixed penalty notice for non-school attendance issued by a local education authority; [205404]

(2) what estimate the Department has made of the number of fixed penalty notices for non-attendance that a local education authority would need to issue to parents for this scheme to be cost neutral to the local authority. [205405]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The administration of the penalty notices scheme for truancy is a matter for the relevant local education authority. The cost to each authority will depend on local circumstances and local arrangements.

We have no estimate of the cost of administering an individual penalty notice for truancy nor of the numbers that would need to be issued to render the scheme cost neutral.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with autistic spectrum disorders are using Government specialist employment programmes. [204482]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 368W, on benefit fraud, what the reasons are for the reduction in the number of local authority benefit fraud inspectors. [205293]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available as staffing levels are a matter for individual local authorities. There have been some changes to the methodology used to construct these figures, introduced to ease the burden on local authorities. These probably account for some of the reduction, but the exact impact is not available. Whilst it may appear that there may be fewer staff investigating fraud our latest figures show improvements in performance with a year on year increase in the number of successful prosecutions and sanctions.

The Government's strategy focuses on preventing fraud from entering the benefits system, deterring those who may be tempted and detecting it when it does happen. We have adopted an end-to-end approach which protects benefits from the point of claim right through to the cessation of payment. There is therefore a far greater number of local authority benefit staff involved in some aspect of programme protection than the number of fraud investigators would imply, although the precise split is not available.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which local authorities have been inspected by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate since it was established; and what percentage this represents of the total number of local authorities. [205301]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the following list. 41 per cent. of local authorities have been inspected.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Published Reports:
Name and Type of Inspection

Allerdale Borough Council
Angus Council
Ashford
Babergh District Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Council
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Blackpool Borough Council
Blyth Valley Borough Council
Boston
Bournemouth Borough Council
Braintree District Council
Brighton and Hove Council
Bristol City Council
Broxbourne Borough Council
Burnley Borough Council
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Canterbury
Cardiff County Council
Carlisle
Castle Morpeth Borough Council
Cherwell District Council
Chester le Street
City of Bradford Metropolitan Council
City of Edinburgh Council
City of Salford Council
City of Stoke on Trent Council
City of York Council
Congleton Borough Council

Council of the Isles of Scilly
Coventry City Council
Crawley Borough Council
Derby City Council
Derbyshire Dales Borough Council
Dover District Council
Dundee City Council
East Devon District Council
East Dunbartonshire Council
East Lothian Council
East Renfrewshire Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
East Staffs
Eastbourne Borough Council
Eden District Council
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Erewash Borough Council
Fife Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Glasgow City Council
Gloucester City Council
Hart District Council
Hastings Borough Council
Herefordshire
Highland Council
Huntingdonshire
Inverclyde Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Isle of Wight Council
Kensington and Chelsea
Kerrier District Council
Kingston upon Hull
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
Leeds City Council
Leicester City Council
Lichfield District Council
Lincoln City Council
Liverpool City Council
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Brent
London Borough of Bromley
London Borough of Camden
London Borough of Croydon
London Borough of Ealing
London Borough of Enfield
London Borough of Greenwich
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
London Borough of Haringey
London Borough of Harrow
London Borough of Islington
London Borough of Lambeth
London Borough of Lewisham
London Borough of Newham
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
London Borough of Southwark
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
London Borough of Waltham Forest
London Borough of Wandsworth
Macclesfield Borough Council
Manchester City Council
Medway Unitary Authority
Merthyr Tydfil
Metropolitán Borough of Wirral
Milton Keynes Council
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Newcastle City Council
North Ayrshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
North West Leicestershire
Northampton Borough Council
Norwich City Council
Nottingham City Council
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Oxford City Council
Pendle
Plymouth City Council
Portsmouth City Council
Powys County Council
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Rochford District Council
Rother District Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Rutland
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Scarborough Borough Council
Scottish Borders Council
Sedgefield
Sefton Council
Sheffield City Council
Shepway
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Holland
South Lakeland District Council
Southampton City Council
Stockton
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Stirling Council
Sunderland City Council
Swale Borough Council
Swindon Borough Council
Teesdale District Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Thanet District Council
The City and County of Swansea Council
Three Rivers District Council
Torbay Council

Torfaen
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Watford
Waveney District Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Wiltshire District Council
Westminster City Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Wokingham District Council

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Completed:
Inspections: where reports await publication/entering on website.

Bedford
Breckland
Chelmsford
Fylde
Gravesham
Renfrewshire
South Gloucestershire
Wyre

Benefit Offices

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many benefit offices there are in the UK. [205298]

Maria Eagle: DWP occupies approximately 1,800 buildings in Great Britain. Of these, The Pension Service is the major occupier in 44 buildings and Jobcentre Plus is the major occupier in 1,482. The Child Support Agency, The Appeals Service, Disability and Carers Service and the Department's Corporate Centre are major occupiers in a further 155 buildings.

The remaining buildings are occupied by the Health and Safety Executive and the Rent Service and are not connected with benefits.

Information about buildings in Northern Ireland is a matter for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when Child Support Agency payments will be sent to *(a)* Amanda Thorogood, *(b)* Mark Young and *(c)* Michael Ashby, constituents of the hon. Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey. [205302]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Derek Wyatt, dated 16 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when Child Support Agency payments will be sent to Amanda Thorogood, Mark Young and Michael Ashby, constituents of the honourable Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

As individual cases are confidential, I will write to you separately about these cases. This is in line with paragraph 12, part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Citizens Pension

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to fund the introduction of a citizens pension in the UK paid to all pensioners on the basis of residency. [205406]

Malcolm Wicks: We are looking at a number of options to improve pension positions. A citizen's pension is an option, along with others, and deserves serious consideration.

Crisis Loans

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in what circumstances staff who process applications for crisis loans are able to seek clarification of details from the applicant. [205373]

Mr. Pond: The majority of crisis loan applications are made by applicants in person either by attending a Jobcentre Plus office or by telephone. Consequently all the required information will usually be acquired at the application stage.

However, if there is insufficient information with which to come to a decision or there is any reason to doubt the validity of the application a Social Fund Decision Maker is required to ask for as much supporting evidence from the applicant as is reasonable and necessary to substantiate the application. The Decision Maker may also investigate the validity of any information provided either anonymously or in confidence and which casts doubt on other evidence held.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all the evidence necessary to determine an application.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how long it took on average to process a disability living allowance application, broken down by level in the last period for which figures are available; [204429]

(2) what percentage of people were refused disability living allowance at each level on initial application in the last period for which figures are available. [204431]

Maria Eagle: The last period for which figures on the processing of claims is available is the month ending November 2004. During that period it took on average 34.3 days calculated in month, or 27.0 days calculated at year to date, to process initial disability living allowance (DLA) claims under normal rules.

The information on people refused DLA is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is as follows:

In the financial year 2003–04, 50 per cent. (220,215) of decisions made on new claims for DLA were refused.

Note:

We are unable to break down the figures, as requested, by component or level as the claim is made for the benefit as a whole not for each component

Sources:

1. Figures for the processing of claims are taken from DWP Disability and Carers Directorate MI Key Reports.

2. MIS Computer system, 100 per cent. data, figures rounded to the nearest five.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had on raising the cut-off age for disability living allowance. [204432]

Maria Eagle: None. It is normal for pensions and benefits schemes to contain different provisions for people at different stages of their lives and disability living allowance is focused on providing extra help to people who are severely disabled early, or relatively early, in life.

Attendance allowance provides help with the disability-related extra costs of people who experience the onset of disability after age 65. Based on the need for personal care, this help is part of the wide range of support that the Government make available to older people so that they can have a decent and secure income in retirement and share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country.

Housing Allowance (Pathfinder Areas)

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on local housing allowance in each of the nine Pathfinder areas in *(a)* additional or increased housing benefit payments, *(b)* additional administrative costs and *(c)* additional funding for debt service and support services; and what percentage increase this represents on the previous year's expenditure in each area. [204466]

Mr. Pond: We do not have sufficient data at this time to calculate the cost of additional benefit payments resulting from the local housing allowance (LHA). However, we estimate that the additional annual cost of the LHA in 2004–05 across all Pathfinders will be around £23 million. The cost will vary across each pathfinder, depending on the number of recipients and the level of rents in each area. It is currently not possible to say what this would be as a percentage of the total benefits spend. The estimated expenditure in each local authority (LA) is in the table.

Local authority	*Additional LHA costs (£ million)*
Blackpool	1.0
Brighton	6.0
Conwy	0.5
Coventry	1.5
Edinburgh	4.0
Leeds	4.0
Lewisham	4.5
North East Lincolnshire	1.0
Teinbridge	0.5

We have earmarked £6.2 million to support the additional administrative and IT costs associated with managing the implementation of LHA in the nine Pathfinder authorities. No funding has been allocated for "debt services". Although, in order to support those claimants who will be taking responsibility for paying rent to their landlord for the first time, local authorities have been funded to make suitable arrangements for the provision of appropriate help and guidance. The scope of the service provided will depend on the type and size of caseload and the anticipated level of demand in each authority.

As part of the £6.2 million, in 2003–04, £2.4 million was allocated to the nine local authorities to fund additional administrative and IT costs. This amounts to an 11 per cent. increase across the nine authorities. Included in this figure was £100k to pay for the claimant support service as described.

Invalidity Benefit

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to help people on invalidity benefit to obtain employment; and if he will make a statement. [202950]

Maria Eagle: Pathways to Work is a groundbreaking scheme designed to help people on incapacity benefits back into work. Early results from the current seven pilot areas are extremely encouraging. In his pre-Budget report on 2 December the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that these pilots will be extended, starting from October 2005, to an additional 14 Jobcentre Plus districts. This expansion will focus support on the 30 most disadvantaged local authority districts and means that the Pathways approach will be available to around 900,000 people.

In addition to the extension of the Pathways pilots there were a number of supporting measures announced in the pre-Budget report. These include an extra £30 million for New Deal for Disabled People in 2005–06; changes to the work focused interview regime; and improved arrangements for people on incapacity benefits to try out work and to take up self-employment. Also announced was extra support for GPs, including the piloting of improved arrangements on fitness for work advice and placing employment adviser support within interested GPs' surgeries.

Overseas British Pensioners

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will estimate how many British pensioners are living abroad; [205321]

(2) if he will estimate how many British pensioners are living abroad in countries where UK pensions *(a)* are and *(b)* are not uprated; [205322]

(3) if he will estimate the additional cost to the Exchequer that would be incurred if the pension for British citizens living abroad in countries where the pension is not uprated were to receive the full uprate. [205323]

Malcolm Wicks: We uprate the state pension in countries with which we have a reciprocal agreement or where there is a legal requirement to do so.

The number of people in receipt of state pension who are resident outside Great Britain is 970,000, of whom: 520,000 reside in countries where the state pension is not uprated and 450,000 reside in countries where the state pension is uprated.

If all state pensions paid to people residing outside Great Britain were to be fully uprated and thereafter paid at the rate they would have been had the individuals concerned remained in Great Britain, the estimated extra cost in 2004-05 would be around £400 million and would increase year on year.

Notes:

1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest 10,000.

2. Costs are in cash terms and are rounded to the nearest £10 million.

3. Both caseload and costs are derived from the 5 per cent. sample.

Source:

DWP 5 per cent. administrative data sample as at 31 March 2004.

Pension Credit

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in *(a)* Burnley and *(b)* Lancashire are in receipt of pension credit. [204503]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the following table.

Pension credit recipients, 31 October 2004

	Households	*Individuals*
Burnley	4,940	5,925
Lancashire	53,775	65,640

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.

3. Individual recipients may include a small number of partners under age 60.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* individuals and *(b)* households were receiving (i) pension credit and (ii) the savings component of pension credit in Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central constituency as at 30 September; and what the average award was in each case. [204614]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on numbers of pension credit recipients in Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central and the average level of awards at 30 September and 31 October, where available, is given in the following tables. The average award of the savings element in Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central at the end of May 2004, the latest date for which this figure is available, was £7.89.

Table 1: Pension credit recipients, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central constituency—30 September 2004

	Households	*Individuals*	*Average award (£)*
Pension credit	4,530	5,325	41.12
Savings element of pension credit	3,240	3,790	Not available

Table 2: Pension credit recipients, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central constituency—31 October 2004

	Households	*Individuals*	*Average award (£)*
Pension credit	4,545	5,345	41.05
Savings element of pension credit	3,255	3,810	Not available

Notes:

1. Numbers of recipients are rounded to the nearest five.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.

3. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

4. The numbers of households and individuals in receipt of the savings element include those who were receiving the savings element only and those who were receiving both the savings and guarantee elements.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the latest estimate is of the number of pensioners in the Ribble Valley and Fulwood; how many are entitled to pension credit; and how many have taken up pension credit. [205063]

Malcolm Wicks: The most recent estimates of pensioner population by parliamentary constituency are contained in "Census 2001—Census Area Statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies in England and Wales", which is available in the Library. This shows that there were 21,338 people aged 60 or over living in the Ribble Valley constituency on Census Day. Information on the number of pensioners likely to be eligible for pension credit is not available at constituency level. Information on the number of pension credit recipients in the Ribble Valley constituency is given in the table.

Ribble Valley constituency—pension credit recipients 31 October 2004

	Number
Households	2,855
Individuals	3,380

Notes:

1. Figures in the table are rounded to the nearest five.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.

3. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Perth constituency are in receipt of *(a)* pension credit and *(b)* pension savings credit. [205445]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the following table.

Pension credit recipients, Perth constituency, 31 October 2004

	Households	*Individuals*
Pension credit	3,635	4,305
Savings element of pension credit	2,730	3,225

Notes:

1. Numbers of recipients are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.
3. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.
4. The numbers of households and individuals in receipt of the savings element include those who were receiving the savings element only and those who were receiving both the savings and guarantee elements.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202246]

Maria Eagle: The special advisers for the Department for Work and Pensions did not travel abroad on any occasion between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

The special advisers did occasionally travel domestically in an official capacity during this period. On six of these occasions the advisers travelled by train with two visits to Newcastle, one to Manchester, one to Rotherham, one to Wakefield and one to Sheffield, each of these at the cost of standard open return ticket.

These visits were undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Telephone Costs

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the estimated cost to his Department of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic numbers and *(b)* international numbers was in the last year for which figures are available. [202186]

Maria Eagle: This information is not available.

Pensioners (Perth)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the total number of *(a)* pensioners and *(b)* pensioner households in Perth constituency. [205446]

Malcolm Wicks: In winter 2003–2004 there were 11,940 pensioner households in the parliamentary constituency of Perth, accounting for 16,390 pensioners.

Notes:

1. Pensioners are defined as those aged 60 or over.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
3. Figures are as at September 2003.
4. Any residence found to have 4 or more occupants aged 60 and over is not included in the household figures as it is assumed to be RCNH (Residential Care/Nursing Home).
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Pensions

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer to the hon. member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 664W, on pensions, what the proportions are in each *(a)* region and *(b)* local authority area in Scotland. [205528]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is in the table:

	Men		*Women*	
	Population in each local authority or Region	*Percentage of relevant population in each local authority or Region*	*Population in each local authority or Region*	*Percentage of relevant population in each local authority or Region*
Aberdeen City	11,500	87.3	11,900	49.3
Aberdeenshire	14,400	97.9	11,800	47.0
Angus	7,700	91.6	6,800	46.3
Argyll and Bute	5,800	78.6	6,400	49.1
The Scottish Boarders	7,900	89.6	7,700	50.3
Clackmannanshire	2,700	89.3	2,400	43.9
West Dumbartonshire	5,200	91.7	6,300	54.8
Dumfries and Galloway	10,900	85.5	10,300	47.3
Dundee City	8,800	84.9	10,400	53.9
East Ayrshire	7,300	89.9	8,200	54.8
East Dumbartonshire	6,600	88.2	5,800	42.9
East Lothian	6,500	97.0	5,800	48.5
East Renfrewshire	5,700	96.8	5,700	50.9
City of Edinburgh	23,700	86.5	25,300	48.9
Falkirk	9,400	98.7	8,400	47.9
Fife	22,500	94.6	20,700	47.2
Glasgow City	28,400	84.8	37,300	54.6
Highland	14,500	94.7	12,400	45.7
Iverclyde	5,100	92.7	6,200	56.5

	Men		Women	
	Population in each local authority or Region	*Percentage of relevant population in each local authority or Region*	*Population in each local authority or Region*	*Percentage of relevant population in each local authority or Region*
Midlothian	4,800	92.5	4,500	48.1
Moray	6,500	100.0	5,000	46.1
North Ayrshire	8,200	88.0	8,400	47.9
North Lanarkshire	16,600	89.7	18,100	50.6
Orkney Islands	1,500	100.0	1,400	55.9
Perth and Kinross	10,600	97.1	8,700	45.6
Renfrewshire	10,400	94.1	10,700	51.6
Shetland Isles	1,200	92.2	1,000	41.1
South Ayrshire	7,700	84.9	8,600	52.7
South Lanarkshire	18,800	97.9	17,800	45.8
Stirling	5,600	99.1	4,900	46.4
West Lothian	7,900	96.2	6,700	44.2
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	1,300	58.5	1,600	40.6
Scotland	305,500	91.0	307,100	49.4

Notes:
1. Figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
2. Data is rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
4. Population figures are taken from mid-2003. Percentages shown as 100 may actually have been calculated as slightly higher than 100 i.e. the benefit caseload is apparently at least as high, if not higher, than the corresponding population figure.
5. The relevant population refers to all males aged 65 and above and females aged 60 and above living in the specified areas.
6. A full basic State Pension (£77.45 in 2003–04) is paid to those who fully satisfy the contribution conditions either in their own right or where applicable, on the basis of their late or former spouse's contributions.

Sources:
1. IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent, sample as at 31 March 2004.
2. The Population data sources are the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the General Register Office, Scotland (GROS).

Video Conferencing

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [202189]

Maria Eagle: There are currently 213 video conference (VC) units installed across the Department. A breakdown by building and agency is in the following table.

Business/agency	*Number of buildings*	*Number of VC units installed*	*Number of buildings with VC unit installed*	*Percentage of buildings with facilities*
Disability and carers service	15	17	9	60
Debt management	9	0	0	0
The appeals services	33	15	12	36
CSA	84	7	6	7
Jobcentre plus	1,336	33	23	2
The pensions service	102	61	41	40
Corporate and shared services	109	80	37	34
Total	1,688	213	128	8

Notes:
1. Some buildings are occupied by more than one business unit so may have been counted more than once.
2. There are plans for a further 14 VC units in Jobcentre Plus, and other parts of the Department are considering the wider use of videoconferencing

Winter Fuel Payment

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of eligible people who have not received backdated winter fuel payments for the first three years of the scheme, broken down by region. [204746]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to estimate with confidence how many people were eligible for backdated payments for the first three years of the scheme. Our working assumption was that about 1.9 million people could have been eligible of whom about 1.2 million have now been paid. There is no cut off date for these retrospective payments.

HEALTH

Asthma

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what services are available from the national health service for patients with asthma and allied disorders; [203816]

(2) how many people suffer from asthma and allied disorders; [203817]

(3) how many people were treated by the national health service for asthma and allied disorders in the last year for which figures are available; [203818]

(4) how much money was spent by his Department on people with asthma and allied disorders in the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion this was of his Department's budget; [203819]

(5) what guidance is issued by his Department to *(a)* general practices and *(b)* hospitals about treating patients with asthma and allied disorders. [203820]

(6) what funding has been provided for research by his Department in the last seven years on *(a)* the causes of asthma and allied disorders and *(b)* tackling these conditions. [203821]

Dr. Ladyman: Most people with asthma receive an excellent service from their general practitioner, including advice on self-management and, where necessary, appropriate medicines. The GP may also refer patients to hospital for specialist investigation and treatment.

Asthma is the most chronic disease in the United Kingdom. Accurate data for numbers affected are difficult to obtain. From the Office of National Statistics General Practice Database 1996 it was estimated that 6.7 per cent. of men and 6.9 per cent. of women in England and Wales were treated for asthma, about 3.5 million people.

In 2003–04, the last year for which data are available, there were about 13,431,000 first outpatient appointments, 5,448,000 elective hospital admissions and 15,313,000 new accident and emergency attendances at national health service hospitals. In 2002, the last year for which data are available, there were about 241 million appointments with GPs. In addition, patients received advice and, in some cases, treatment in NHS walk-in centres, through NHS Direct and community pharmacies. It is not possible to derive from the estimates how many individuals were involved, or to estimate what proportion of all contacts with the NHS included advice and treatment for a specific condition, or to estimate what proportion of the total NHS budget is involved.

Under the new primary medical care contracting arrangements a unique step has been taken in using indicators and information management across specific chronic disease areas, including asthma, to deliver improved outcomes for patients.

New primary medical care contracting arrangements provide primary care trusts with enormous potential to improve the quality and access to a wider range of services for patients. It centres on a comprehensive quality and outcomes framework. This is like a national service framework, covering the whole of primary care, with substantial financial incentives attached, and constitutes the single biggest investment in quality care in the NHS. Lives will be saved through effective chronic disease management of specific conditions, like heart diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma.

The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology. The MRC spent some £12.6 million on asthma research in the four years from 1999–2000 to 2002–03. Information for the years 1997–98 and 1998–99 is not available.

The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the NHS. In the six years from 1997–98 to 2003–04, the Department's national research programmes spent £9 million on projects related to asthma.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by NHS organisations. From this funding, the NHS reported spending in support of respiratory diseases as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	23.5
2003–04	29.1

This information was not collected centrally prior to 2002.

Celebrating Our Cultures

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health where the community engagement projects proposed in "Celebrating our Cultures" will be established; how much funding his Department is committing to the establishment of these projects; and what the timescale is for establishing them. [203604]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Mental Health in England will invest £2 million in the national community engagement programme, which will comprise 80 projects run by non-statutory voluntary and community sector organisations across England over the next two years.

14 pilot projects have been identified; an independent evaluation of them has been commissioned to inform the development of the remaining projects.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what duties a community development worker employed as set out in "Celebrating our Cultures" will have. [203605]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Community development workers will build capacity within communities, provide support to non-statutory sector groups, identify and access stakeholders, help articulate the needs and views of the communities they serve and facilitate better communication and better pathways to recovery in the non-statutory and statutory sectors. A detailed policy implementation guide on community development workers is due for publication very shortly.

Dental Practice Board

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the annual budget of the Dental Practice Board was in each year since 1997; and how many staff it employed in each year. [204265]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The annual budget of the Dental Practice Board and the number of staff they have employed since 1997 are shown in the table.

	Net operating cost (£ million)	*Staff number*	*Staff whole time equivalent*	*Estimated whole time at 90 per cent. Equivalent heads*
1996–97	21.2	578	—	520
1997–98	23.5	520	—	468
1998–99	23.0	480	—	432
1999–2000	23.0	442	400	—
2000–01	22.9	423	381	—
2001–02	24.7	401	367	—
2002–03	26.6	—	342	—
2003–04	23.8	—	325	—

Notes:

1. All the information has been derived directly from the audited accounts.
2. The figures reflect the changes in accounting requirements and formats of information have changed over the years.
3. The financial information is the equivalent of the current net operating cost, which is expenditure less operating income.
4. The staff number information requirement has now changed from number of heads to whole time equivalent.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices are shown on the nhs.uk website; and how many of these were *(a)* registering new patients for NHS treatment, *(b)* registering new children aged up to 18 years, *(c)* registering charge-exempt adults for NHS treatment, *(d)* registering charge-paying adults for NHS treatment and *(e)* providing occasional NHS treatment to non-registered patients on the latest date for which figures are available. [199945]

Ms Rosie Winterton: On 24 November 2004, there were 8,622 general and personal dental practices shown on the nhs.uk website as able to accept at least one category of patient for registration or occasional treatment under the national health service.

The number of general and personal dental service practices shown on the website as accepting new NHS patients on 24 November 2004, is shown in the table.

	Number of practices
Registering children aged 0 to 18 years for NHS treatment	3,781
Registering charge exempt adults for NHS treatment	2,833
Registering charge paying adults for NHS treatment	2,485
Providing occasional NHS treatment to non-registered patients	1,496

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists there are in each county in England per 10,000 of the population; how many accept NHS patients; and what the figures were in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [202691]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information by county is available on the number of general and personal dentists working in the national health service but not on how many are currently accepting new NHS patients. Numbers at September in the years 1997, 2001 and 2004 in each county in England per 10,000 of the population, are shown in the tables.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 100,000 of the population in each county in England at 30 September 1997, 2001 and 2004

County	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*
Bedfordshire	33	44	34
Buckinghamshire	46	48	49
Cambridgeshire	34	39	40
Cheshire	46	44	35
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	39	43	28
Cumbria	38	39	38
Derbyshire	35	39	42
Devon	40	47	30
Dorset	36	41	40
Durham	34	33	36
East Sussex	43	45	48
Essex	38	41	40
Gloucestershire	45	44	44
Hampshire	36	42	42
Hertfordshire	51	58	62
Kent	42	41	41
Lancashire	37	38	34
Leicestershire	30	32	34
Lincolnshire	24	27	25
Norfolk	39	44	44
Northamptonshire	29	29	41
Northumberland	37	37	33
North Yorkshire	38	41	36
Nottinghamshire	36	42	39
Oxfordshire	39	46	49
Shropshire	35	41	38
Somerset	38	41	40
Staffordshire	30	33	33
Suffolk	38	41	41
Surrey	51	58	58
Warwickshire	32	37	46
West Sussex	44	52	61
Wiltshire	34	39	35
Worcestershire	39	38	40

Note:

Some areas do not have county status even though they may lie within county boundaries. For these areas, the number of general and personal dental service dentists is given by local authority area. This information is given in the table.

Source:

Dental Practice Board and resident population figures 1997, 2001 and 2004.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 100,000 of the population in local authorities not defined by county at 30 September 1997, 2001 and 2004

Local authority	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*
Barking and Dagenham	30	36	35
Barnet	59	64	63
Barnsley	37	40	28
Bath and North East Somerset	50	56	55
Bexley	41	41	45
Birmingham	37	38	41
Blackburn with Darwen	41	41	38
Blackpool	36	39	34
Bolton	42	41	38
Bournemouth	47	55	53
Bracknell Forest	41	44	56
Bradford	36	34	31
Brent	61	63	65
Brighton and Hove	49	54	57
Bristol, City of	48	52	49
Bromley	48	50	55
Bury	44	39	39
Calderdale	37	38	38

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 100,000 of the population in local authorities not defined by county at 30 September 1997, 2001 and 2004

Local authority	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*
Camden	81	82	79
City of London	212	82	144
Coventry	31	37	41
Croydon	53	56	59
Darlington	33	43	49
Derby	36	40	42
Doncaster	35	38	33
Dudley	31	35	39
Ealing	71	63	51
East Riding of Yorkshire	25	26	25
Enfield	42	47	55
Gateshead	44	48	44
Greenwich	45	46	50
Hackney	45	41	39
Halton	32	34	13
Hammersmith and Fulham	81	87	80
Haringey	60	56	61
Harrow	50	58	63
Hartlepool	30	30	27
Havering	38	47	53
Herefordshire, County of	42	45	38
Hillingdon	43	49	52
Hounslow	68	71	54
Isle of Wight	31	28	28
Islington	51	74	66
Kensington and Chelsea	58	51	50
Kingston upon Hull, City of	30	38	33
Kingston upon Thames	48	52	53
Kirklees	38	43	35
Knowsley	35	33	32
Lambeth	50	46	51
Leeds	41	44	37
Leicester	45	43	43
Lewisham	47	50	50
Liverpool	44	40	37
Luton	36	40	39
Manchester	53	51	39
Medway	38	39	45
Merton	43	46	52
Middlesbrough	48	56	57
Milton Keynes	39	41	42
Newcastle upon Tyne	47	51	60
Newham	37	38	39
North East Lincolnshire	29	32	26
North Lincolnshire	23	29	11
North Somerset	46	52	56
North Tyneside	69	71	38
Nottingham	43	45	52
Oldham	39	37	26
Peterborough	32	39	46
Plymouth	39	44	34
Poole	35	40	63
Portsmouth	32	39	40
Reading	51	52	64
Redbridge	48	60	61
Redcar and Cleveland	41	41	40
Richmond upon Thames	57	61	62
Rochdale	35	31	27
Rotherham	36	39	20
Rutland	55	46	42
Salford	42	42	37
Sandwell	40	41	41
Sefton	42	41	14
Sheffield	40	43	29
Slough	39	45	56
Solihull	34	39	43
South Gloucestershire	41	37	36
South Tyneside	40	39	32
Southampton	34	33	28
Southend-on-Sea	35	41	37
Southwark	46	38	40
St. Helens	36	42	27
Stockport	42	44	32
Stockton-on-Tees	47	54	53
Stoke-on-Trent	30	32	29
Sunderland	31	37	41
Sutton	51	57	61
Swindon	36	39	39
Tameside	35	37	27
Telford and Wrekin	33	33	36
Thurrock	24	28	31
Torbay	46	56	41
Tower Hamlets	36	36	46
Trafford	47	53	49
Wakefield	32	37	29
Walsall	26	26	28
Waltham Forest	37	42	47
Wandsworth	59	65	57
Warrington	39	44	22
West Berkshire	32	40	43
Westminster	113	103	83
Wigan	38	39	38
Windsor and Maidenhead	38	50	63
Wirral	46	49	11
Wokingham	31	38	42
Wolverhampton	31	34	40
York	46	56	45

Note:

Population figures for 1997 and 2001 are based on 2001 projections for the resident population for counties and local authorities. Population figures for 2004 are based on 2003 resident population projections.

Source:

Dental Practice Board and resident population figures for 1997, 2001 and 2004.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201700]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department used the following Muslim newspapers during 2003–04 to advertise the flu immunisation campaign:

Muslim News

Muslim Weekly

The Department also advertises in ethnic minority press, not specifically Muslim media, as part of integrated campaigns using media mix, including television, national and women's professional press and online where it is appropriate to target this audience.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years; giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [200786]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Diabetes

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will take steps to encourage diabetic patients to report adverse reactions to *(a)* human and *(b)* animal insulin treatments to the Committee on the Safety of Medicine; [202662]

(2) if he will list the known side effects of *(a)* human and *(b)* animal insulin in the treatment of diabetes; and if he will ensure a drug reporting system is in place to monitor abnormalities arising from such treatments; [202663]

(3) if he will ensure that the guidelines for general practitioners on administering human insulin to diabetic patients include the latest information regarding its side-effects; and if he will make a statement. [203155]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* As with all medicines, the safety of human and animal insulin is continuously monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the committee on safety of medicines (CSM).

The known side-effects for human and animal insulin are listed in the summary of product characteristics and patient information leaflet for each individual product. Information for prescribers is also available in the British National Formulary (BNF). The product information for prescribers and patients is amended as new information on side effects emerges. The most frequent side effect of both human and animal insulin is hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar). Other side effects include reactions around the injection site, allergic reactions and oedema (swelling).

MHRA/CSM receives reports of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) submitted by doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and coroners via the yellow card scheme. There is also a legal requirement for companies to report suspected ADRs to their drugs.

Enabling patients directly to report suspected ADRs to the MHRA was one of the recommendations made in the Report of an "Independent Review of the Yellow Card Scheme", published in May 2004. On the publication of the independent review report aforementioned, my noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for State for Health, the Lord Warner, immediately accepted the recommendation to introduce direct patient reporting of suspected ADRs.

A working group of the CSM, under the chairmanship of a lay member of the CSM, has been established to advise on the development of pilots to gauge effectiveness of mechanisms for patient reporting of suspected ADRs. The working group has wide representation from patient and consumer groups, wider academia, pharmacy and medicine.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of people with diabetes were offered screening for the early detection of diabetic retinopathy in the last period for which figures are available. [203619]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Figures show that, in 2003–04, 53 per cent., of people identified with diabetes in England received screening for the early detection of diabetic retinopathy.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the funds available to support the target for diabetic retinopathy screening contained within the 2003 to 2006 planning and performance framework has been allocated. [203620]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Diabetes national service framework delivery strategy announced that capital funds would be available to support the purchase of digital cameras and related equipment for diabetic retinopathy screening to support implementation of the planning and performance framework target. Capital funding of £27 million is available. £14.6 million capital has been made available to strategic health authorities to distribute locally—£5 million in 2003–04 and £9.6 million in 2004–05. A further £12.4 million will be available in 2005–06.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made towards ensuring that *(a)* all those people diagnosed with diabetes and *(b)* all people at an increased risk of developing diabetes, are included on practice-based registers. [203621]

Ms Rosie Winterton: By March 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) need to ensure that practice based registers are updated and used as a basis of systematic treatment regimens with advice and treatment in line with the diabetes national service framework standards.

The number of people with diabetes on practice-based registers is increasing. In March 2004, PCTs were reporting that there were 1,545 million patients identified by practices as having diabetes. This rose to 1.604 million in September 2004.

The PBS Diabetes Population Prevalence model has been developed by the Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Observatory. This model estimates the total diabetes population prevalence—that is, diagnosed plus undiagnosed cases. This allows strategic health authorities and PCTs to identify the number of people with diabetes not identified on practice based registers and to develop robust systems for identifying people with diabetes in their area. The model can be found at http://www.yhpho.org.uk/.

The recently published "Choosing Health" White Paper set out a strategy to help people make healthier choices and to reduce levels of obesity, which increases an individual's risk of developing diabetes.

Pilot projects have been established for screening of those at high risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. A study is being carried out in eight PCTs in deprived areas with high ethnic populations to demonstrate whether systematic screening in primary care is feasible, cost effective and leads to better health care.

Doctors Surgeries

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average list size is of general practitioners in *(a)* North Southwark and Bermondsey, *(b)* the London Borough of Southwark and *(c)* Greater London. [205545]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is collected for primary care trust (PCT) areas. The average list size of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs) in the PCTs in the South East London Strategic Health Authority area is shown in the table.

Average list size of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)1 by PCT in London as at 30 September 2003

Number (headcount)

			Unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)	*Patients of UPEs*	*Average list size*
	England		28,568	52,713,780	1,845
	London		4,134	8,357,783	2,022
Q05	*North Central London*		705	1,423,532	2,019
	5A9	Barnet PCT	204	376,448	1,845
	5K7	Camden PCT	118	246,705	2,091
	5C1	Enfield PCT	138	289,642	2,099
	5C9	Haringey PCT	136	288,120	2,119
	5K8	Islington PCT	109	222,617	2,042
Q04	*North West London*		1,001	2,083,156	2,081
	5K5	Brent PCT	174	352,148	2,024
	5HX	Ealing PCT	172	361,069	2,099
	5H1	Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	92	188,199	2,046
	5K6	Harrow PCT	134	222,615	1,661
	5AT	Hillingdon PCT	127	258,940	2,039
	5HY	Hounslow PCT	120	253,558	2,113
	5LA	Kensington and Chelsea PCT	82	195,743	2,387
	5LC	Westminster PCT	100	250,884	2,509
Q06	*North East London*		796	1,716,696	2,157
	5C2	Barking and Dagenham PCT	70	170,493	2,436
	5C3	City and Hackney PCT	133	271,202	2,039
	5A4	Havering PCT	108	248,029	2,297
	5C5	Newham PCT	126	305,285	2,423
	5NA	Redbridge PCT	115	243,463	2,117
	5C4	Tower Hamlets PCT	114	220,739	1,936
	5NC	Waltham Forest PCT	130	257,434	1,981
Q07	*South East London*		880	1,706,031	1,939
	TAK	Bexley Care Trust	110	220,748	2,007
	5A7	Bromley PCT	167	316,819	1,897
	5A8	Greenwich PCT	108	253,156	2,344
	5LD	Lambeth PCT	189	353,962	1,873
	5LF	Lewisham PCT	149	279,822	1,878
	5LE	Southwark PCT	157	281,524	1,793
Q08	*South West London*		752	1,428,368	1,899
	5K9	Croydon PCT	181	359,756	1,988
	5A5	Kingston PCT	93	177,468	1,908
	5M6	Richmond and Twickenham PCT	97	197,985	2,041
	5M7	Sutton and Merton PCT	207	383,794	1,854
	5LG	Wandsworth PCT	174	309,365	1,778

[1] UPEs include GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs and PMS salaried GPs.

Note:

Patient data have been revised from previously published figures.

Source:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Drug Overdoses

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many confirmed deaths there were in 2003 from drug overdoses involving *(a)* methadone use and *(b)* buprenorphine use. [205223]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The most recently available information on the number of drug related deaths is for 2002[1]. The figures show for the second consecutive year, a reduction in the overall number of drug related deaths.

In 2002 there were 216 deaths from drug poisoning involving methadone[2] and two deaths from drug poisoning involving buprenorphine.

[1] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[2] Source: Office for National Statistics. Report. Deaths related to drug poisoning, England and Wales 1998–02. Health Statistics Quarterly 21, 59–66.

E-mail

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for announcements and publications issued by his Department and those public bodies reporting to him. [203687]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's website does not currently have the technology in place to allow users to subscribe to an e-mail notification facility. However, we do send e-mails to alert recipients of our online bulletins when new editions are published.

We are investigating how we might introduce this technology to improve the service we provide for users of the Department's website.

In addition, the Department is an active contributor to the "Info4local" website for local authorities, which does offer e-mail notifications.

Generic Prescribing

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what targets have been set by his Department on increasing generic prescribing in the community; what progress has been made in meeting these targets; and what savings have been made as a result; [203063]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the community generic prescribing rate; and if he will estimate how much the NHS in England would save if community generic prescribing levels increased to 80 per cent. [203064]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's Public Service Agreement for 1999–02 included targets to increase the generic prescribing rate for all practices in England to an average 72 per cent., and to move at least half of those practices with a generic prescribing rate below 40 per cent., to above that level—both to be achieved by March 2002. Those targets were achieved. The average rate of generic prescribing in England has reached 78 per cent., and some primary care trusts are achieving rates in excess of 85 per cent. The savings from increasing the current figure to 80 per cent., are likely to be relatively modest, but we have not made an estimate.

Health Forum

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the independent regular forum with regional and national media to discuss health issues will be attended by Ministers from the Department; and if he will make a statement. [199483]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The details of an independent regular forum with national and local media as outlined in the "Choosing Health" White Paper are still being finalised, but once they are clear, I will give full consideration to the involvement of Ministers.

Health Funding (North-west)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made for central funding of health per capita in *(a)* Burnley, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* the North West in each of the next three years. [204804]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The table shows the 2005–06 revenue funding per un-weighted head of population for primary care trusts (PCTs) in the North West, which also covers Burnley and Lancashire.

The 2006–07 and 2007–08 revenue allocations have not yet been determined. Work has commenced on the next round of allocations, covering the period 2006–07 to 2007–08. The next round of revenue allocations will be announced early in the new year.

North West 2005–06: PCT allocations per un-weighted head of population

PCT	2005–06 allocation per un-weighted[1] head of population (£)
Ashton, Leigh and Wigan	1,185
Bebington and West Wirral	1,165
Birkenhead and Wallasey	1,278
Blackburn with Darwen	1,197
Blackpool	1,291
Bolton	1,146
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	1,181
Bury	1,087
Carlisle and District	1,081
Central Cheshire	986
Central Liverpool	1,405
Central Manchester	1,383
Cheshire West	1,036
Chorley and South Ribble	986
Eastern Cheshire	1,024
Eden Valley	985
Ellesmere Port and Neston	1,102
Fylde	1,133
Halton	1,268
Heywood and Middleton	1,206
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	1,137
Knowsley	1,319
Morecambe Bay	1,121
North Liverpool	1,394
North Manchester	1,549
Oldham	1,173
Preston	1,237
Rochdale	1,194
Salford	1,346
South Liverpool	1,376
South Manchester	1,297
South Sefton	1,244
Southport and Formby	1,165
St. Helens	1,195
Stockport	1,051
Tameside and Glossop	1,174
Trafford North	1,162
Trafford South	1,088
Warrington	1,040
West Cumbria	1,118
West Lancashire	1,094
Wyre	1,156

[1] Un-weighted population figures are supplied by the Office for National Statistics. Un-weighted head of population allocation figures have not been modified for age, need and cost in accordance with the formula which is used to inform allocations.

Health Services (Lewisham, Deptford)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department has taken to improve primary healthcare services in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency since 1997. [201102]

Dr. Ladyman: As a result of the Department's "Shifting the Balance of Power" initiative, responsibility for commissioning and improving health services has

been delegated to primary care trusts (PCTs). The Department sets out a national framework and strategic health authorities ((SHAs) performance manage the PCTs to ensure these are adhered to.

The November 2004 primary care access survey results show that, nationally, 99 per cent. of patients were able to be offered an appointment within two working days to see a general practitioner, and 99 per cent. of patients were able to be offered an appointment within one working day to see a primary care professional.

Locally, information is not collected for parliamentary constituencies. However, the Department is able to confirm that recent investment in South East London primary care services includes:

The development of a £2 million Walk-in Centre on Goodward Road in New Cross, Lewisham PCT.

A planned local improvement finance trust project to deliver improved care facilities for the three boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham.

Heart Attacks

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether there is a correlation between increases in air pollution and rates of heart attacks; and how many deaths from heart attacks were ascribed to this cause, in the most recent year for which figures are available. [204843]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* The committee on the medical effects of air pollutants (COMEAP) is currently completing a report on the association between air pollution and cardiovascular disease. It is clear that daily variations in concentrations of air pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide are associated with changes in daily rates of heart attacks and other acute cardiovascular events. The exact mechanisms of effects are not, however, yet clear. Long-term exposure to fine particles and to sulphur dioxide is associated with an increased risk of death from cardiovascular causes: again, the mechanisms of effect are unclear.

The COMEAP report will be published in 2005. COMEAP will then begin to revise its earlier report on the quantification of the effects of air pollutants on health in the United Kingdom. Attention will be paid to the associations between air pollutants and cardiovascular disease.

Hospital Cleaning Audit

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will conduct an audit in early 2005 to assess whether his Department's guidance on improving hospital cleaning to fight MRSA is being implemented. [204201]

Miss Melanie Johnson: National health service trusts have been set a target to reduce Methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" rates by 50 per cent., by 2008 and they will be judged on their performance against this target. The "Guide to Contracting for Cleaning" is one of a number of tools which have been made available to the NHS and it has been made clear that NHS trusts are expected to follow this guidance and to make resources available.

It is for the Healthcare Commission to assess the performance of hospital trusts in meeting the "Standards for Better Health", published in 2004.

Hospital Infections

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cleaning materials to combat. MRSA are being assessed by the Health Protection Agency. [200891]

Miss Melanie Johnson: At the Department's request, the Health Protection Agency has convened a rapid review panel to consider the evidence relating to claims concerning prevention or control of infections such as Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus. This is an ongoing process and to date five products, which could be used for cleaning, have been assessed and reports on these products will be published shortly.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [200779]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with policy and practice in other Government Departments, the Department of Health does not record separately those cases, which are brought against the Department involving the Human Rights Act 1998. Human rights are integrated into the general law and are rarely the sole basis of challenge. This makes them very difficult to count separately.

IT Systems (GP Practices)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on negotiations to introduce agreed IT systems into general practitioner practices. [204905]

Mr. Hutton: The national programme for information technology in England (NPfIT) has, from its inception, consulted closely with individual expert primary care practitioners, including practising general practitioners, as well as the national professional bodies and groups. This consultation helped to inform the user requirement which was published in the programme's output-based specification. Clinicians and users were also involved in evaluating the proof of solution demonstrators developed by suppliers, and in evaluating the supplier bid. In the procurement and delivery process, particularly in the development and

testing phases, representative stakeholders are being consulted to ensure that their requirements and concerns are taken into account.

Local service providers (LSPs) act as prime contractors to deliver the elements of the national programme in a geographical area. It is the primary responsibility of the LSPs to work with a range of other suppliers to deliver the solutions that the national health service needs. This includes working with primary care system providers to ensure that the systems in use across the NHS conform to the national standards required and can be upgraded to integrate with new national applications as they come on line. All systems developed by suppliers contracted under NPfIT are subject to stringent testing prior to acceptance. All systems, whether NPfIT systems or existing GP or hospital systems, are subject to integration testing to ensure compliance. All systems are also made available to users in a "model community" environment for evaluation and feedback.

LIFT Programme (Newcastle)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been allocated to schemes under the Local Investment Finance Trust (LIFT) programme in the Newcastle primary care trust area; how much has been spent; and what the planned opening dates of new facilities financed under LIFT in the City of Newcastle are. [204410]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Newcastle primary care trust has been allocated £1.58 million in capital enabling funds and this has been used to support the delivery of new primary care premises at Brunton Park and Kenton Resource Centre, both opening to patients in March 2005 and Walker Health Centre, opening to patients in May 2005.

Local Authorities/Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what scores were achieved by each *(a)* local authority and *(b)* primary care trust in (i) Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and (ii) Easington against each indicator used to determine the spearhead group of local authorities and primary care trusts; and what the source of each score was. [204951]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

The spearhead group is based upon the local authorities (LAs) which are in the "worst" fifth of areas for three or more of the following five factors:

Male life expectancy at birth.

Female life expectancy at birth.

Cancer mortality rate, under 75s.

Circulatory disease mortality rate, under 75s.

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (LA summary), average score.

The "worst" fifth of areas are identified as those with the shortest, that is, lowest average life expectancy and highest mortality rates and deprivation scores.

The spearhead group is identified in terms of LAs, using LA data. The spearhead group primary care trusts (PCTs) are identified as those PCTs that overlap geographically, either wholly or in part, with the spearhead group LAs. A PCT is not included in the spearhead group based on the data for the PCT, but based on the data for the LAs covering the same geographical area.

The source of data on life expectancy at birth is the Office for National Statistics (ONS) at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=8841&More=n.

The source of data on mortality in people under 75 is the ONS mortality data set via the national centre for health outcomes development compendium of clinical and health indicators—available to NHS users only.

The indices of multiple deprivation are published by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=4610&l=3.

Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Easington rankings for the Spearhead Group

Data period 1995–97

	All cancers (persons aged under 75)		*Circulatory disease (persons aged under 75)*		*Male life expectancy at birth*		*Female life expectancy at birth*	
Local authority	*Ranking*[1]	*Score*[2]	*Ranking*	*Score*	*Ranking*	*Score*	*Ranking*	*Score*
Basingstoke and Deane	181	0	143	0	185	0	202	0
East Hampshire	219	0	203	0	191	0	167	0
Eastleigh	239	0	282	0	272	0	316	0
Fareham	311	0	282	0	344	0	316	0
Gosport	39	1	128	0	83	0	80	0
Hart	282	0	296	0	301	0	258	0
Havant	138	0	170	0	212	0	108	0
Isle of Wight	297	0	191	0	166	0	258	0
New Forest	275	0	311	0	301	0	311	0
Portsmouth	76	0	81	0	99	0	74	0
Rushmoor	199	0	243	0	166	0	160	0
Southampton	70	1	116	0	99	0	135	0
Test Valley	331	0	269	0	292	0	219	0
Winchester	275	0	296	0	321	0	281	0
Easington	22	1	1	1	31	1	4	1

	Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2004)		
	Ranked by LA average score	Score	Number of times score is in 'worst' fifth
Basingstoke and Deane	311	0	0
East Hampshire	326	0	0
Eastleigh	309	0	0
Fareham	328	0	0
Gosport	189	0	1
Hart	352	0	0
Havant	137	0	0
Isle of Wight	126	0	0
New Forest	284	0	0
Portsmouth	88	0	0
Rushmoor	285	0	0
Southampton	96	0	1
Test Valley	315	0	0
Winchester	336	0	0
Easington	8	1	5

[1] All rankings shown in the table are out of 352 local authorities, of which those ranked 71 or lower fall in to the 'worst' fifth in England. City of London and the Scilly Isles are excluded from the ranking list because of small numbers.

[2] Where the score is shown as "1" in the table then the ranking of the local authority falls in to the "worst" fifth in England, otherwise the score is zero.

Note:

The Spearhead Group is the group of local authorities that appear at least three times in the "worst' fifth.

Long-term Care (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many older people are in receipt of long-term care in the Coventry area. [204839]

Dr. Ladyman: In March 2001, there were 2,140 care home places in Coventry for adults aged 65 and over. This includes places in residential care homes, general and mental health nursing homes, private hospitals and clinics. Information about the number of people in those places is not centrally available.

Medical Imaging Records

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that medical imaging records can be transferred between health regions. [203985]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* The latest digital technology for capturing, storing, distributing and displaying static or moving images such as X-rays or scans—picture archiving and communications systems (PACS)—has now been designated a core service within the national programme for information technology (NPfIT) in the national health service in England. PACS takes away any need to print on film and to file or distribute images manually.

NPfIT has produced a comprehensive common specification for what a PACS system needs to achieve, and local systems must link to the national data "spine" of the NHS care record service. This will ensure that images can be sent between, and viewed remotely and across, NHS locations, leading to more efficient diagnosis and treatment. By maximising the economies of scale and negotiating pan-regional contracts with their local services providers, NPfIT has been able to negotiate PACS at substantially reduced prices over the prices previously paid by individual trusts. It has also agreed an implementation plan for early deployment. Implementation has begun at the first early-adopter sites, where systems will go live across acute trusts and primary care trusts from January 2005. The plan envisages PACS to be in place in 80 per cent. of user organisations by March 2006, and in 100 per cent. of organisations by March 2007.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202400]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's official spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers' public engagements.

MRSA

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the MRSA cases reported in 2003–04 in the West Midlands resulted in death. [204390]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* Mandatory Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus surveillance does not collect information on the number of deaths.

Neo-natal Hearing Screening

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial resources have been made available in areas piloting neo-natal hearing screening to support early intervention where a hearing problem has been identified. [204846]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* Primary care trusts are responsible for ensuring that resources from their general allocations are available to support children when a hearing problem has been identified. On joining the modernising hearing aids service programme, all national health service departments have been given funding to provide digital hearing aids to all of the children on their caseload within two years. We therefore expect all such children in England to have digital hearing aids by March 2007 at the latest.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which areas are participating in the pilot of neo-natal hearing screening; what assessment has been made of the pilot schemes; and when the programme will be rolled out across the country. [204847]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* A list of sites now offering newborn hearing screening has been placed in the Library. Overall, about 70 per cent. of all newborn babies are now being screened. It is currently planned that the remaining areas of England will be participating in the programme by December 2005.

The experience of the 23 phase one sites has informed the roll out and is the subject of a detailed evaluation.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202559]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department aims to ensure that hon. and right hon. Members receive a substantive response to their named day question on the named day and to endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. The Department makes every effort to achieve these timescales but, unfortunately this is not always possible.

Skipton Fund

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the appeal procedures for the Skipton Fund are with regard to *(a)* the number of lay people and *(b)* the number of medical members on the appeal panel; what qualifications are expected of them; and how members of the panel are selected; [204557]

(2) what criteria are used to select lay members of the appeal panel for the Skipton Fund; [204558]

(3) how many members of the appeal panel of the Skipton Fund are from the legal profession; [204559]

(4) where in Scotland appeal panels for the Skipton Fund sit; [204560]

(5) whether legal members of the appeal panel for the Skipton Fund are selected from within the Scottish Justice System when hearing appeals from Scottish applicants; [204561]

(6) whether appellants of the Skipton Fund are able to attend panel hearings; [204562]

(7) whether appellants of the Skipton Fund have access to expert opinion to challenge the decision of the medical pane; [204563]

(8) whether the documents used by the Skipton Fund in reaching decisions are made available to the appellant; [204564]

(9) whether applicants are entitled to *(a)* legal representation and *(b)* legal aid when appealing Skipton Fund decisions; [204565]

(10) whether the funding for the appeals panel for Skipton Fund decisions comes from the Skipton Fund; [204566]

(11) how many unsuccessful applicants to the Skipton Fund have requested an appeal; and how many unsuccessful applicants have had an appeal heard; [204574]

(12) what his estimate is of the percentage of those who apply for an appeal to the Skipton Fund whose appeal is heard; [204575]

(13) how many appellants to the Skipton Fund have been successful in their appeal. [204576]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Patient groups have been consulted and have commented on an initial proposal for the appeals process and membership of an independent appeals panel. The United Kingdom health departments are now considering arrangements for the appeals process and the appointment of the panel.

Appointments will be made through the public appointments process. Funding for the appeals panel will be made available from the central departmental budget allocated to the Skipton Fund.

In England and Wales, decisions on the granting of legal aid are a matter for the Community Legal Service. The Skipton Fund will not meet any legal or other expenses incurred by an applicant.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional funding is given to the MacFarlane Trust to enable it to administer the Skipton Fund; and where the additional funding comes from. [204568]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Macfarlane Trust does not administer the Skipton Fund.

Three trustees and the chairman and chief executive of the Macfarlane Trust were asked to take on the role of directors and company secretary for the Skipton Fund on an interim basis. This decision was made so that we could make progress with establishing the Skipton Fund. The trustees have a background in management, administration and working with haemophilia patients.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people have made an application to the Skipton Fund for compensation; [204569]

(2) how many applicants to the Skipton Fund have received the first stage payment of £20,000; and how many applicants have gone on to receive the further stage payment of £25,000; [204570]

(3) how many applicants to the Skipton Fund have had their *(a)* Stage 1 and *(b)* Stage 2 applications (i) declined and (ii) accepted; [204571]

(4) how many applicants to the Skipton Fund have applications outstanding for *(a)* Stage 1 and *(b)* Stage 2 compensation payments; [204572]

(5) if he will estimate the total sum paid to date for *(a)* Stage 1 and *(b)* Stage 2 compensation from the Skipton Fund. [204573]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the number of number of stage one and stage two applications received by the Skipton Fund and their status is shown in the table.

	Stage one applications	Stage two applications
Application forms dispatched[1]	4,526	382
Total completed applications received	3,139	137
Number of applications paid	2,560	112
Number of applications declined	146	[2]
Number of applications which have not been fully completed and have been returned to the applicants clinician	281	10
Number of applications being processed	152	11
Total amount paid to claimants (£)	51,200,000	2,800,000

[1] Figures as at 6 December 2004.

[2] A small number of stage two applications have been deferred because the claimants do not yet meet the criteria.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201298]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201381]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, Ruth Kelly.

Temporary Medical Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the total cost of temporary *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* staff in the NHS in (i) England and (ii) each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [199924]

Mr. Hutton: The figures shown in the table relate to all costs of temporary staff employed in the national health service since 1997. Figures for 2003–04 are provisional and unaudited. Primary care trust (PCT) data are available from 2000 and information about temporary staffing spend has been placed in the Library.

Hospital and community health services expenditure on temporary staff in England

£

	Temporary nurses[1]	Temporary doctors[2]	Total temporary staff[3]
1997–98	216,338,567	87,273,079	480,056,334
1998–99	272,225,162	93,524,750	585,555,208
1999–2000	361,656,683	106,125,019	730,080,550
2000–01[4]	435,431,882	138,342,148	912,315,525
2001–02	554,323,821	197,775,563	1,189,073,367
2002–03	589,738,042	278,530,346	1,420,956,862
2003–04[5]	524,675,129	344,759,550	1,465,853,757

[1] Temporary nurses = non-NHS nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff.

[2] Temporary doctors = non-NHS medical staff.

[3] Total temporary staff = total non-NHS staff.

[4] 2000–01 is the first year for which PCT data are available.

[5] 2003–04 data are provisional.

Sources:

Annual financial returns of health authorities 1997–98 to 2001–02.

Annual financial returns of strategic health authorities 2002–03 to 2003–04.

Annual financial returns of NHS trusts 1997–98 to 2003–04.

Annual financial returns of primary care trusts 2000–01 to 2003–04.

Third-world Health

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what aid his Department is giving to third world countries on health issues. [204671]

Mr. Hutton: The provision of aid to the developing world is an issue where the Department for International Development (DFID) leads. We work with DFID to ensure the priorities of international organisations, such as the World Health Organisation, take full account of the requirements of developing countries.

Travel Costs

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203775]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library. Travel costs for those special advisers who accompany their Ministers overseas are included in the annual list on Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers.

The travel costs given for Ministers' offices include Ministers, their officials and special advisors where appropriate. The Department's finance systems do not maintain information by individual Minister or special advisor. Information on travel costs has not been maintained, separate from other business expenses, since April 2004.

Ministers' offices *Year*	*Expenditure (£)*
1997–98	376,376
1998–99	427,970
1999–2000	508,932
2000–01	557,042
2001–02	480,855
2002–03	511,899
2003–04	595,045

Department *Year*	*Expenditure (£)*
1997–98	6,592,081
1998–99	5,814,365
1999–2000	7,080,034
2000–01	7,295,706
2001–02	7,972,843
2002–03	7,607,890
2003–04	8,211,382

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Treatment Funding

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has given to primary care trusts of the consequences of refusing to fund medical treatments or technologies solely because they have not been approved by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. [204099]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Health Service Circular 1999/176, issued in August 1999, indicates that national health service bodies should continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from National Institute for Clinical Excellence is not available at the time the technology first becomes available. These arrangements should involve an assessment of the available evidence.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 20 December 2004

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Circular EC34/2004

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the status is of Electoral Commission Circular EC34/2004; and whether it is binding on local authorities. [204752]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission informs me that it provides advice to electoral registration officers and returning officers by virtue of the provisions of section 10(3) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

Electoral registration officers undertake their statutory duties independently of local authorities. The Commission's advice is not binding on either electoral registration officers or local authorities.

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission whether political parties were consulted before the publication of Circular EC34/2004 by the Electoral Commission. [204753]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission informs me that it did not consult any political parties before issuing this circular. It is not the Commission's practice to consult parties on such circulars, which are statements either of the Commission's policy or of its understanding of the law.

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what estimate the Government have made of the impact on general election turnout of Electoral Commission Circular EC34/2004; and if he will make a statement. [204756]

Mr. Viggers: This is a matter for the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the total expenditure of the Electoral Commission has been in each year since its creation; and what the estimated budget is for the forthcoming year. [204751]

Mr. Viggers: Total expenditure by the Electoral Commission in each of the years 2000–01 to 2003–04, and projected figures for the current financial year, are set out as follows. The figures for 2000–01 relate to the period from the inception of the Commission in November 2000. The Speaker's Committee will consider in the new year the financial provision to be made for the Commission in respect of 2005–06.

	£ million
2000–01	2.421
2001–02	6.066
2002–03	18.160
2003–04	18.635
2004–05 (projected)	28.621

Further detailed information is available in the Commission's annual reports and accounts, each of which has been laid before the House and is available in the Library.

Political Party Registration

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what steps the Electoral Commission are taking to prevent the malicious or confusing registration of party names by new political parties. [204749]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission informs me that, provided an application by a party for registration complies with the registration requirements, it is required to grant the application unless the registered name proposed by the party meets any of the criteria set out in section 28(4) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, or it includes any word or expression prohibited by the Registration of Political Parties (Prohibited Words and Expressions) Order 2001.

The Commission has no power to refuse an application for registration on any other grounds relating to the proposed name.

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission if the Electoral Commission will place in the Library the guidelines it follows when considering the registration of political parties' names. [204750]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission informs me that it has procedures in place for managing the registration of political party names and emblems. These include an internal guidance document, which details the process to be followed in the registration of a political party and the legislative provisions to which the Commission must adhere in undertaking this process. A copy of this document will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what advice the Government have given the Electoral Commission on *(a)* the registration of political parties' names and *(b)* preventing malicious or confusing registration of party names by new political parties. [204754]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission informs me that is has not received any advice from the Government on *(a)* the registration of political parties' names or *(b)* preventing malicious or confusing registration of party names by new political parties.

Voting Lists

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what advice the Government have given

the Electoral Commission on the provision of absent voting lists to political parties outside an election period. [204755]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission informs me that it has received no advice from the Government on this matter.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Solicitor-General how many pages the Attorney General's legal advice to Her Majesty's Government on the legality of initiating hostilities against Iraq produced in March 2003 comprised. [204328]

The Solicitor-General: The information requested relates to the provision of confidential legal advice and is covered by legal professional privilege. It is therefore exempt from disclosure under paragraphs 2 and 4(d) of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what effect instability in Afghanistan is having on his Department's reconstruction effort in the country. [204723]

Hilary Benn: Security in Afghanistan is an urgent challenge facing the Afghan Government, especially in the South and East of the country where Taliban insurgents continue to encroach.

In spite of fears that deterioration in the security situation would disrupt the Presidential elections, there were very few serious security incidents or reports of violence in the run-up to election or on the day itself. This was a credit to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the Coalition and the Afghan Army and Police, who all contributed to maintaining security.

Threats to the safety of Afghan and international staff have meant that some NGOs and international organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to operate in some parts of the country. So far, the Department for International Development's programme has not been significantly affected and difficulties exist only in specific areas. Organisations are doing an excellent job in working around these areas to continue providing assistance wherever possible. However, the overall effect on the provision of humanitarian aid and reconstruction is very serious.

Arab World (Sexual Health)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the recent statements by Mohammed Imad al-Daker, consultant on HIV/AIDS at UNICEF, concerning the role of the media in the Arab world with regard to sexual health education; and if he will make a statement. [204634]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not seen a full text of the interview concerned. But Mohammed Imad al-Daker's reported comments, for example on the need for a responsible media to disseminate correct information to help prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS seem most sensible. Proper consideration of women's rights taking into account the cultural values of the Arab world, along with strong national media awareness, are key to stemming the reported rapid increase of HIV/AIDS in the region.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [200873]

Hilary Benn: The cost to DFID for the use of external consultants in the last two years was as follows:

2002–03: £221 million

2003–04: £213 million.

These figures differ slightly from the amounts recently published in Statistics on International Development and used in previous replies to parliamentary questions.

DFID officials have reviewed expenditure entered on to the DFID database and identified payments, including grants to NGOs and international organisations, which had been wrongly classified as Personnel activities. This expenditure has now been recoded.

The following table shows the changes made to the expenditure data for consultancies for the past five years. These amendments will be made to the copy of Statistics on International Development available on the DFID website.

Spending on external consultants alone as a proportion of the total aid budget has fallen since 1997 from 10 per cent. to 5 per cent.

DFID Programme: Bilateral Technical Co-operation

£000

	Personnel	
	Consultancies	*Previous figures published in Table 12 of SID*
1999–2000	193,342	196,832
2000–01	196,251	198,861
2001–02	205,054	192,724
2002–03	221,320	216,370
2003–04	212,733	204,773

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203301]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development maintains a database of all files raised in our three offices in the United Kingdom. However, individual departments and overseas offices are

responsible for disposing of their own records, and the number of files destroyed is not held centrally. To obtain this information from the manual finding aids in the devolved registries would incur disproportionate costs.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203302]

Hilary Benn: Since 1999, the Department for International Development has produced 73 schedules for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/

Invoices

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200623]

Hilary Benn: In the financial year ending March 2004 DFID received 28,359 invoices from suppliers. 96.26 per cent. were paid within 30 days of DFID being in receipt of a valid invoice. The average length of time to settle an invoice and make payment is estimated at 13 calendar days (unaudited figure). Some 80 invoices (0.28 per cent.) remained unpaid after 90 days.

DFID has a clear and consistent policy on prompt payments which has been well publicised to staff. Procedures have been established for monitoring performance, identifying weaknesses and implementing remedial action as appropriate. DFID is a signatory to the Better Payment Practice Code, providing a clear signal that we take a responsible attitude to our relationship with suppliers.

Iraq

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what provision has been made for *(a)* housing, *(b)* feeding and *(c)* schooling for women and children who have left their homes in Fallujah as a result of coalition forces' action; and what arrangements will be made for these refugees to return to their homes. [205115]

Hilary Benn: The Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) is leading the humanitarian response to the situation in and around Fallujah. The IIG has established a Fallujah co-ordination team, to address the immediate needs of the displaced Fallujah population, and to plan for their safe return to the city. DFID is providing advice to the IIG Fallujah team on humanitarian, health, and coordination issues.

The IIG, and DFID advisers working with the Iraqi Government, report that most of the displaced population are staying with host families or in public buildings. The IIG and some humanitarian agencies are supplying food, water, and medical supplies to these people, and shelter also to those who are not under hard cover. Iraqi Government Ministries have delivered mattresses, blankets, tents, and heaters to displaced families.

The IIG is working with multi-national forces to ensure that Fallujah is safe from unexploded ordnance and insurgent activity, before the displaced population returns. The Iraqi Government have made provision for the rebuilding of family homes, and are also putting essential supplies in place for the returning families. The IIG is planning for the return of Fallujah's displaced people, which will be organised district-by-district, beginning at the end of December. The IIG, and United States agencies, are currently working on restoring essential services to the city of Fallujah, and have plans in place for long-term reconstruction work, including work on schools.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202394]

Hilary Benn: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on-the-record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers' public engagements.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many day's sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204507]

Hilary Benn: Information on sickness absence in DFID for the years 2001 to 2003 is contained in the following table. The information for 1997 to 2000 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

	Average working days absence per staff year	*Number of staff*
2001	8.3	1,391
2002	8.0	1,611
2003	7.0	1,696

DFID is fully committed to the effective management of sickness absence in common with other Government Departments. Earlier this year DFID introduced a new Maximising Attendance policy which is aimed at promoting good attendance management and provides processes that support staff on sick leave and encourage an early, and fit, return to work.

Sudan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of reports of attacks on food aid convoys in Darfur; how many such attacks have been *(a)* reported and *(b)* confirmed in each month since April; what assessment his Department has made of the parties responsible for the attacks; and if he will make a statement. [204637]

Hilary Benn: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has reported approximately 25 incidents since April 2004. Of these, three were major incidents where staff were either kidnapped or killed.

The African Union monitoring mission in Darfur is responsible for investigating ceasefire violations, including attacks on humanitarian convoys, and has found violations by all sides to this conflict. DFID has made it very clear that all parties must stop all attacks immediately and abide by the ceasefire and the Security and Humanitarian Protocols, including by ensuring unimpeded access for humanitarian workers and taking all steps to prevent attacks against civilians.

Only through peaceful dialogue will a sustainable solution to the conflict in Darfur be found. So we are urging all sides to engage constructively at the peace talks in Abuja. A UK observer is present at these talks.

Uganda

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he has received representations from *(a)* the authorities in Uganda and *(b)* his Department's in-country programme office in Kampala regarding termination of the Uganda Forest Sector Policy and Strategy Project. [205903]

Hilary Benn: On 13 December, DFID Uganda received a letter from Uganda's Minister of State for the Environment presenting his concerns about the implications of the completion of DFID's support for Uganda's forestry sector. DFID Uganda is in discussion with the Minister about his concerns. The final phase of DFID's Uganda Forest Sector Policy and Strategy Project began in 2001, and was scheduled to end in June 2003. Since then, DFID has granted the project two extensions to accommodate the slow pace of reform in the forestry sector. At the time of the last extension in June 2004, we agreed with the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment that our support would formally end on 31 December 2004. The sector is well supported by other development partners.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agency Staff

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the membership is of the *(a)* Joint Nature Conservation Committee, *(b)* Advisory Committee on Business and Environment, *(c)* Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment, *(d)* Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances, *(e)* Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment, *(f)* Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committee, *(g)* Agricultural Wages Board for England and Wales and *(h)* Agricultural Wages Committees for England; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203811]

Alun Michael: The appointees to each of these bodies and the figures that are available are listed, subject to the qualifications as follows.

(i) Membership is accurate as at 31 March 2004

(ii) The total cost of salaries and expenses paid to members and the running costs for each committee are included with Defra's accounts but a re not separately identifiable. I have included the remuneration levels, as at 31 March 2004 and the total sponsorship cost to the department (which would include remuneration and expenses of members, administrative costs, research funding and any other cost to the department directly related to the sponsorship of the body) for the last financial year.

(iii) Departmental staff service these bodies alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately.

(iv) The Advisory Committee on Business and Environment is no longer in existence.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

(Chair vacant)
Dr. Lucinda Blakiston-Houston
Prof. Robert Dodgshon
Mr. John Lloyd Jones, OBE
Sir Martin Doughty
Dr. Mike Moser
Dr. John Faulkner
Dr. John Markland, CBE
Mr. Michael Scott
Sir Ewen Cameron, DL
Prof. Peter Doyle
Prof. Richard John Pentreath
Prof. David Ingram, OBE
Appointed members receive £8,536 per annum
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£40,284

Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment

Dr. Alan P. Knight (Chair)
Ms Julia P. Hailes
Mrs. Alison Austin QBE
Mr. Mark A. Barthel
Dr. Frans Berkhout
Mrs. Jane Bickerstaffe
Mr. Tim T. S. Brown
Mr. Anthony W Burton
Mr. Pooran Desai

Dr. Charlotte Grezo
Mr. John D. Lawrence
Mr. William S. Mccartney
Ms Teresa M. K. Smallbone
Dr. Phil Stubbs
Mr. Francis J. Sullivan
Ms Fiona Weir
Chair and members are unpaid
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£46,000

Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances

Prof. Jane Plant CBE (Chair)
Dr. Stuart Dobson
Dr. Gev Eduljee
Dr. Paul Harrison
Prof. Roy Harrison QBE
Prof. Gabrielle Hawksworth
Ms Gwynne Lyons
Dr. Lorraine Maltby
Prof. James Readman
Prof. David Williams QBE
Chair receives £193 per day and members receive £149 per day
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£16,114

Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment

Prof. Christopher J. Pollock (Chair)
Prof. Jules N. Pretty
Prof. Jim Dunwell
Prof. Mark J. Bailey
Prof. Jeffrey Stuart Bale
Mr. Edward John Cross
Dr. Susan E. Hartley
Dr. Penelope Hirsch
Dr. Philip Eric Hulme
Prof. Keith Lindsey
Mr. Jim Orson
Dr. Mark Rees
Dr. Jonathan Paul Stoye
Chair receives £198 per meeting, members receive £153 per meeting
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£95,000

Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committee

Mrs. Pauline Allwood
Mr. George A. Timothy Astbury
Miss Patricia Norah Aston
Mr. Christopher J. Barker
Mr. George R. Bartaby
Mrs. Margaret Beeny
Mr. Barry Capon
Mr. Allan Gerald Corless
Mr. James Darlington
Mr. William John Dyke
Mr. Peter Parley
Mr. Alan Felstead
Mr. Michael Filer
Ms Jeanette Irene Firrell
Mrs. Simonie Fowler
Miss Constance Ethel Fozzard
Mr. Michael J. Harrison
Mr. Michael A. Harrowven
Mr. Andrew Brian Humphries
Mr. Keith Johnson
Mr. Trevor Jones
Mr. Edward Thomas Kirby
Mr. P. J. Longhurst
Mr. Keith Arundel McDougall
Mr. G. Miller
Mr. Andrew Milner
Mrs. Margaret Newbury
Mr. Edward Orgill
Mr. Harold Pollins
Mr. J. Richardson
Mrs. Gillian Noelle Rostron
Mr. Peter Edward Sanders
Mr. Desmond M. Saunders
Mr. Peter G. Scates
Mr. John C. Sinkins
Mrs. E. Slade
Mr. D. W. A. Stevens
Miss Rosemary Prudence Thorne
Mrs. D. Thornton
When chosen to hear a case members are paid £114 per day
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£110,145[1]

Agricultural Wages Board for England and Wales

Mr. John Derek Evans (Chair)
Dr. Hugh Billot
Prof. Gillian Morris
Chair receives £242 per day, members receive £150 per day
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£6,000

Agricultural Wages Committees

Dr. Wilbye Belfield
Mr. David Hill
Mr. David Anthony Howard
Mr. Keith Johnson
Mrs. Gwendoline Lavender
Mr. James Robert Leishman
Mr. Alan Pendlebury
Mr.Harold Pollins
Mr. Ian Potter
Mr. Ian Hughes Colin Powell
Mr. Derek Ridout
Canon Frank Scuffham
Mr. John C. Sinkins
Mr.Richard Tinn
Mr. Roger Bailey Weaver
When chosen to hear a case members receive £114 per day
Defra expenditure on sponsorship—£110,145[1]

[1] The sponsorship costs for the Agricultural Wages Committees and Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committees are combined due to the fact that the same Defra division is responsible for them.

Bee Disease

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many bee disease inspectors there were in each year since 1997; and how many she expects there to be in 2005–06. [204552]

Alun Michael: The number of bee inspectors employed by the National Bee Unit in England and Wales in each year since 1997 is set out in the table:

	National bee inspector	*Regional bee inspectors*	*Seasonal bee inspectors*
1997	—	10	35
1998	—	10	34
1999	—	8	38
2000	—	8	39
2001	—	8	39
2002	—	8	38
2003	1	8	39
2004	1	8	36

In 2005–06, the National Bee Unit expects to employ the same number of bee inspectors as in 2004–05.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has held with Bee Disease Insurance Ltd. regarding her intended reductions to the Bee Health Programme. [204553]

Alun Michael: Defra officials met with representatives of Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd. on 24 November to discuss the possible impact of future plans for the bee health programme on its insurance scheme.

Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd. was also represented when my noble friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Lords) met representatives of beekeepers on 23 November and at a meeting with Defra officials on 26 November.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many outbreaks of European Foulbrood have occurred in bee stocks in each year since 1997. [204555]

Alun Michael: The number of cases of European foul brood disease confirmed by the National Bee Unit in bee colonies in England and Wales in each year since 1997 is set out in the following table:

	England	*Wales*	*Total*
1997	721	27	748
1998	837	36	873
1999	853	13	866
2000	1,007	34	1,041
2001	816	23	839
2002	649	18	667
2003	653	20	673
2004	672	19	691

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 22 October, concerning a constituent, Richard Jones, and the issue of recycling. [205826]

Alun Michael: A response to the hon. Member's letter is awaiting signature and will be sent shortly.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many television advertisements her Department has commissioned on *(a)* terrestrial and *(b)* satellite television channels in the last 12 months; and what the cost was in each case. [201309]

Alun Michael: The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has not commissioned any paid television advertising, for showing on terrestrial or satellite television channels in the last 12 months.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203331]

Alun Michael: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in Defra under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203332]

Alun Michael: In accordance with its selection policies and disposal schedules, Defra has destroyed the following number of files in each of the last five years.

	Number
2000	[1]31,002
2001	[2]25,475
2002	57,694
2003	57,796
2004	[3]44,313

[1] Former MAFF files.
[2] Includes former MAFF files.
[3] Up to November.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203353]

Alun Michael: Since 1999, the Department has completely revised its General disposal schedule guidance. This has been replaced by a single generic schedule, together with 13 specialised schedules to date; work on others will continue to progress where other specialist business needs are identified These schedules provide for the disposal of records which are specific to Defra's administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last

five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice.

Departmental Refurbishment

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the departmental refurbishment projects that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* that will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used during refurbishment comes from legal and sustainable sources. [204108]

Alun Michael: Refurbishment projects currently in progress are located at:

Nobel House, London

55 Whitehall, London

Whitehouse Lane, Cambridge

Veterinary Investigation Centre, Sutton Bonington

Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Weybridge (three projects)

Polwhele AHU, Truro

Chalfont Drive, Nottingham

No other projects are planned to start within the next three months. All are programmed for completion in 2004–05. Funding for 2005–06 refurbishment projects has not yet been allocated so it is not possible to confirm projects which might start within the first three months of 2005–06.

It is Defra policy to use only timber procured from sustainable and legal sources in all building and refurbishment projects. Contract conditions require suppliers and contractors to notify the Department of the source of all virgin timber supplied, including details of the forest or plantation where it was grown and all subsequent places of delivery through the supply chain prior to receipt. They must provide documentary evidence of source from a relevant body that complies with ISO Guide 65: 1996 (EN 45011:1998) General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Schemes, and who is accredited to audit against forest management standards by a national or international body. This latter body must also be compliant with ISO Guide 61 General Requirements for Assessment and Accreditation of Certification Bodies. Contractors also have an obligation to ensure that timber derives from legally felled trees according to the laws operating in the country of origin.

Document Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department has spent on acquiring shredding equipment for office use in each year since 1997. [202093]

Alun Michael: The Department does not collate centrally information on the procurement of shredding equipment for office use and this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff hours have been spent shredding documents in each month since January. [202094]

Alun Michael: The Department does not collate information on the number of staff hours spent shredding documents and this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors underlie the increase in the rate of files shredded by her Department since January 2003; and if she will make a statement. [202095]

Alun Michael: Defra continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

The estimated number of Defra files destroyed in 2004 (48,341) is likely to be below the number of files destroyed in both 2002 (57,694) and 2003 (57, 796).

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the criteria used to decide which documents and files should be shredded; and what mechanism exists to ensure that documents and files are not destroyed for other reasons. [202096]

Alun Michael: Defra keeps records for as long as they are needed for administrative and business purposes. Records of enduring historical value are selected for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of the National Archives "on the basis of guidelines which are published on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records management/advice/".

Equipment Leasing

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by her Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202363]

Alun Michael: From information held centrally, the cost to public funds of equipment leasing arrangements entered into by the core Department in each of the last two years is £1,257,143 for financial year 2002–03 and £512,293 for financial year 2003–04. The leasing arrangements covered photocopiers, postal franking machines and other miscellaneous office equipment.

Fisheries

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the total EU fishing catch was taken in waters within the *(a)* UK 12 mile limit and *(b)* UK 200 mile or median line limit in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by species. [204218]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information on the catches by vessels of other member states is only available in terms of totals for the sea areas involved, and this does not include any breakdown of catches in terms of those caught within the UK 12-mile limit or within the UK

200 mile or median line limit. As such, the information requested is not available, and could be made available only through requesting such information from the individual member states concerned.

Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204377]

Alun Michael: The Department has five gymnasiums on its estate. These make an important contribution to the health and well-being of Defra staff but it is difficult to reflect this in terms of monetary value. The cost of these for the year 2003–04 is £82,500 for rent and rates although some are located in basement areas with limited alternative uses. There would also be an unquantifiable cost for utilities. The gymnasiums are run by the members who pay from their own resources for equipment, training and any other operational charges.

Horse Passports

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many horse passports have been issued to date, broken down by issuing authority. [204129]

Alun Michael: The following is a list of the most recent figures that English Passport Issuing Organisations (PIOs) have submitted to Defra. Fifty-three out of fifty-eight (53/58) have submitted such information. No figures have been received from five organisations, Appaloosa Horse Club, British Bravian Warmblood Association, British Morgan Horse Society, British Warmblood Association and Friesan Horse Society GB.

Additionally, there is one organisation (British Horse Database) that has ceased trading. The passports that were issued by this organisation remain valid and are updated by Weatherbys.

Names of passport issuing organisations	*Passports issued*
American Miniature Horse Club	5
American Saddlebred Association GB	183
Anglo European Studbook	11,175
American Quarter Horse Association—UK	937
Arab Horse Society	15,659
British Appaloosa Society	1,020
British Association Purebred Spanish Horse Ltd.	400
British Connemara Pony Society	2,031
British Driving Society	15,603
British Falabella Studbook	9
British Hanoverian Horse Society	600
British Harness Racing Club	521
British Horse Society	20,900
British Miniature Horse Society	1470
British Palomino Society	467
British Percheron Horse Society	775
British Show Jumping Association (BSJA)	2,944
British Skewbald and Piebald Association	694
British Spotted Pony Society	710
Caspian Breed Society UK	152
Caspian Horse Society	165
Cleveland Bay Horse Society	2,000
Dales Pony Society	1,328
Dartmoor Pony Society	4,674
Donkey Breed Society	4,900
EquiCours/Selle Français	18
Exmoor Pony Society	1,418
Farmkey	10,494
Gypsy Cob Society	159
Hackney Horse Society	718
Haflinger Society	510
Horse Passport Agency	52,008
Horse Passports Ltd.	1,331
Hurlingham Polo Association	4,440
Icelandic Horse Society	434
Irish Draught Horse Society GB	14,000
Lipizzaner Society of GB	171
Lustiano Breed Society GB	185
Miniature Mediterranean Donkey Association	218
National Pony Society	8,830
New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society	9,962
Pet ID UK	35,316
Pleasure Horse Society	12,500
Shire Horse Society	3,487
Sport Horse Breeding of GB	17,546
Sports Pony Studbook Society	292
Spotted Horse and Pony Society	1,582
Spotted Pony Breed Society GB	497
Suffolk Horse Society	181
Trakehner Breeders Fraternity	876
United Saddlebred Association—UK	134
Weatherbys ID	34,686
Weatherbys thoroughbred	173,325
Total	474,640

National Forest Company

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people are employed by the National Forest Company; what its running cost was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on its future. [203101]

Alun Michael: The total staff complement of the National Forest Company in 2003–04 was 17.5. The Company's actual running cost expenditure for that year was £1,096,674.

The National Forest Company will continue aiding the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the north midlands by developing a major forest resource there.

Pesticide Run-Off

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the latest research on pesticide run-off into water supplies; and what her Department's advice on sheep dipping is. [205500]

Alun Michael: Earlier research indicated that surface runoff from crop protection pesticides applied in the field to adjacent surface water was low compared to the amount that reached surface waters from field drains or applications of herbicides to man made surfaces. Therefore recent research has concentrated on pesticide movement from the field to surface waters via field

drainage systems. This research has shown that recommendations on the timing of applications were critical for minimising water concentrations.

Defra has now commissioned a project looking into the scientific basis for mitigation differentiated by soil type to reduce pesticide transport to surface waters in drain flow. The results of this work are expected towards the end of 2007. The Department has also recently completed research that developed a model to estimate pesticide concentrations that arise from run-off from hard man made surfaces to surface water.

The Environment Agency is also funding development of a Decision Support tool which will enable us to determine the environmental impact of different land use combinations. Within this tool will be a module that considers pesticide impacts. This tool will be available within 1–2 years.

Since 1 April 1995 the sale and supply of OP based sheep dips has been restricted to only those people holding a Certificate of Competence. The Certificate of Competence scheme is run by the National Proficiency Tests Councils (NPTC) and covers all aspects of the use of sheep dips and of dip disposal.

In 1998 an advisory booklet (AS29) entitled "Sheep Dipping" was produced jointly by HSE; SEPA; VMD and the Environment Agency. The booklet provides detailed guidance on sheep dipping including the correct disposal of sheep dip. This booklet was sent to all sheep farmers in 1994 and again in 1998 and is available free of charge from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and online: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/as29.htm.

Special Advisers

Mr. Andrew Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204288]

Alun Michael: I refer to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the then Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Taskforces

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department spent on task forces and similar bodies in each year since 1997. [204879]

Alun Michael: The Department cannot separately identify within its accounts the amount spent on task forces and similar bodies.

WALES

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203324]

Mr. Touhig: Since 1999, the Department has produced no schedules for the disposal of records, which are specific to its administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice.

Plant Health

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 547–48W, on National Assembly for Wales, when responsibility for powers relating to plant health was transferred from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to the National Assembly for Wales; and under what legislation the transfer was effected. [205318]

Mr. Touhig: Functions under the Plant Health Act 1967 and functions under the Plant Varieties Act 1997 (except the functions of "the Ministers" so far as exercisable by a Minister of the Crown other than the Secretary of State for Wales under sections 2,11, 18, 27 to 29, Schedule 1 and paragraphs 7, 14 and 15 of Schedule 3) were transferred to the National Assembly for Wales by the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/672).

Functions of the Secretary of State under the Marketing of Vegetable Plant Material Regulations 1995 and the Marketing of Fruit Plant Material Regulations 1995 were transferred to the National Assembly of Wales by the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 2000 (S.I. 2000/253).

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202250]

Mr. Hain: In the financial year 2003–04, Wales Office special advisers did not make any visits overseas in an official capacity. Within the UK special advisers will on occasion accompany their Ministers on official visits. Information on such visits and their cost is not separately identifiable and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the "Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code".

PRIME MINISTER

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Prime Minister (1) how many hours of his staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004; [205088]

(2) how many of his staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards; [205089]

(3) what percentage of his official Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution; [205090]

(4) what the cost of postage was for his official Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205091]

(5) what the cost was of purchasing his official Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205092]

(6) how many official Christmas cards he sent in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205093]

The Prime Minister: In 2003 I sent approximately 1,600 official Christmas cards at a cost of £350. This year I shall be sending approximately 1,900 official Christmas cards at a cost of £405. The dispatch and staff time for posting those cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in "Government Accounting". The company that supplies the cards makes a donation to charity. In 2003 this was Weston Spirit, a national youth charity tackling issues of social exclusion in young people.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister (1) how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability; [205856]

(2) how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205857]

The Prime Minister: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the Civil Service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments and on the number of staff who have a declared disability.

The latest information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the Civil Service website and the following addresses.

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

Freedom of Information Act

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister how many staff in his Department have been employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205049]

The Prime Minister: It is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a list of those documents held by his Office that *(a)* may be disclosed under Freedom of Information Act 2000 provisions and *(b)* have been destroyed within the preceding four months, that pertain to (i) the European Constitution and (ii) the criteria for acceding to the euro. [204464]

The Prime Minister: The Freedom of Information Act establishes a general statutory right of access to information. Once implemented, on 1 January 2005, a person who writes to a public authority and asks for information will have the right to be told whether or not the authority has the information and, if so, to have that information communicated to them, subject to clearly defined exemptions. Every piece of information held must be considered individually; therefore to consider every document held pertaining to the European Constitution and the criteria for acceding to the Euro and to identify which might be disclosed could be achieved only at disproportionate cost since the information requested is not immediately available.

My office keeps records for as long as they are needed for administrative and business purposes. Records of enduring historical value are selected for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of the National Archives, on the basis of guidelines which are published on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/

Gangmasters

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will set up an inquiry into the co-ordination of policy and the issuing of press statements by the Home Office and the Department for Trade and Industry regarding the regulation of gangmasters prior to the deaths of cocklers in Morecambe Bay. [206082]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the afternoon press briefing given by my official spokesman on 14 December 2004, a copy of which is available on the Number 10 website.

Mr. Alistair Campbell

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Prime Minister (1) for what reasons telephone calls intended for Mr. Alistair Campbell are officially routed to Mr. David Hill's secretary; [205454]

(2) what proportion of the salary of Mr. David Hill's secretary is attributed to the handling of telephone calls for Mr. Alistair Campbell; [205455]

(3) what official responsibility Mr. David Hill has for *(a)* consulting and *(b)* liaising with Mr. Alistair Campbell; [205456]

(4) what role is played by Mr. Alistair Campbell in continuing to *(a)* advise and *(b)* be consulted by Government. [205457]

The Prime Minister: Alastair Campbell is no longer employed as a special adviser. He therefore has no role in advising Government and is not provided with any official support or resources.

Parliamentary Questions

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister to how many written parliamentary questions he responded with an answer which included 'he formulation, 'I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave . . .' during the 2003–04 parliamentary session; and what percentage of answers in that session this represents. [206031]

The Prime Minister: This information is not held in the format requested. However, it is a matter of public record and can be found in the *Official Report*.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 823, on the Working Time Regulations, how many and what percentage of officials in his private office have signed a waiver under the Working Time Regulations. [206004]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to my answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 823W.

CABINET OFFICE

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202479]

Mr. Milburn: When the Duchy of Lancaster receives letters addressed to me as Chancellor drafting is undertaken by the Duchy of Lancaster office and we aim to respond within seven days.

Equipment Leasing

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by the Duchy in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202483]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has not undertaken any equipment leasing arrangements over the past two years.

IT Contracts

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the *(a)* projected cost at the time of tender and *(b)* actual cost at the time of completion was for each IT contract commissioned by the Duchy over the last five years. [201616]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster has not entered into any major information technology (IT) projects over the last five years, save for the construction of its website, which was completed on budget.

TRANSPORT

Bus Lanes

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents took place in bus lanes in each year since 1997. [201610]

Mr. Darling: The number of accidents involving at least one road user in a bus lane for the years 1999 to 2003 are shown in the table. Information is not available prior to 1999.

	Number of accidents
1999	927
2000	851
2001	1,058
2002	1,012
2003	1,035

Car Insurance

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the average cost of car insurance for newly qualified drivers under the age of 25 years. [205187]

Mr. Jamieson: The insurance industry estimates that the average cost of car insurance for all drivers is £370. No separate estimates are available for the average costs for newly qualified drivers under the age of 25.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in his Department in each of the last two years. [202411]

Charlotte Atkins: There were no new builds, demolition re-builds and PFI projects in DfT Central in 2002–03 and 2003–04 but the costs for the Department's agencies are shown in the table:

£ million

	2002–03			*2003–04*		
DfT Unit	*New Build*	*Demo Rebuild*	*PFI Projects (m)*	*New Build*	*Demo Rebuild*	*PFI Projects*
Driving Standards Agency	0	1.237	0	0	0	0
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority	0	0	0	5.667	0	0.570
Highways Agency	0.900	0	0	0	0	0
Maritime Coastguards Agency	0.135	0.406	0	0.331	0.007	0
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	4.121	0.500	0	0.174	0	0
Total	5.156	2.143	0	6.172	0.007	0.570

Departmental Refurbishment

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [202415]

Charlotte Atkins: The cost of building refurbishment in the DfT over each of the last two years are shown in the table:

£ million

DfT Unit	Refurbishment cost 2002-03	Refurbishment costs 2003-04
DfT Headquarters	0.298	1.303
Air Accidents Investigation Branch	0	0.071
Driving Standards Agency	0.264	0.217
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	[1]4.118	[1]4.665
Highways Agency	1.837	0.812
Marine Accident Investigation Branch	0.137	0
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	4.930	2.621
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	0.212	0.063
Vehicle Certification Agency	0	0
Total	11.796	9.751

[1] For these two years DVLA's main office refurbishment costs were not separately recorded as they were included in general maintenance costs. To provide some idea of refurbishment costs in these two years the estimated maintenance costs per annum are approximately £1.2 million.

European Railway Agency

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the role of the European Railway Agency. [206848]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the second paragraph of my answer of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1013W.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202426]

Charlotte Atkins: The Human Rights Act has given rise to little specific litigation against the Department for Transport. Where HR points are taken, they are mostly taken in support of other causes of action, which makes them very difficult to count separately.

The subjects of the convention rights themselves are, to a very great extent, already actionable in existing domestic law.

For these reasons it would not be possible to apportion costs and compensation payments as requested without reviewing all the cases handled by the Department since October 2000, which would give rise to disproportionate cost.

M6 Toll Road

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps his Department is taking to ensure that emergency vehicles with activated blue light beacons are not hindered at toll booths when exiting the M6 toll road; and if he will make a statement; [203346]

(2) if he will make a statement on the conditions of use of the M6 toll road by official emergency vehicles. [203355]

Mr. Jamieson: Under the statutory Order governing tolling at the M6 toll road (The Birmingham Northern Relief Road Toll Order 1998 (SI 1998/124)), police vehicles, fire engines and ambulances are exempt from toll charges.

The M6 toll road concessionaire, Midland Expressway Limited (MEL), has primary responsibility for the operation of the M6 toll road during the lifetime of the concession agreement. Therefore, it is for MEL to ensure that adequate procedures are in place so that emergency vehicles are not unduly hindered when using the toll road.

As regards the Government's policy towards the charging of emergency vehicles for using other toll roads, this generally depends on the legislation governing the tolled undertaking. However, in the consultation paper "Breaking the logjam", published in March 1999, about giving local authorities powers to bring in road user charging schemes, the Government stated that it

"... does not consider it to be appropriate to charge vehicles used by the emergency services ...".

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is towards the charging of emergency vehicles for using *(a)* the M6 toll road and *(b)* other toll roads; and if he will make a statement. [203567]

Mr. Jamieson: I refer the hon. Member to my answer given earlier today (UIN 203346).

Metro Line 3

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact on the start date for Metro Line 3 of the Jacobs Inquiry into the Metro extension in Birmingham; and if he will make a statement. [205996]

Charlotte Atkins: I understand that the study is still under way; when it is complete it will be for Birmingham city council to consider the way forward in discussion with the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, Centro.

Rail (Bicycles)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* the Strategic Rail Authority has had with train companies about their policies regarding the carrying of bicycles on trains; and if he will make a statement. [206053]

Mr. McNulty: There have been no discussions between Ministers and train operating companies about their cycling policies. The Strategic Rail Authority consulted widely with industry stakeholders, including the Association of Train Operating Companies, and the public about its Cycling Policy, published on 11 November 2004. Copies of the Cycling Policy are in the Library of the House.

Strategic Rail Authority

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what mechanisms Strategic Rail Authority staff's pay and conditions will be protected if they transfer to its replacement organisation in his Department. [206238]

Mr. McNulty: The Government's policy as set out in the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice on Public Sector Transfers commits it to apply TUPE principles to these transfers even where TUPE may not apply as a matter of law.

The Railways Bill will make provision for transfers of staff from the Strategic Rail Authority to the Department for Transport to be effected by means of transfer schemes. These schemes will provide for the transfer of staff contracts, and will preserve existing terms and conditions, continuity of employment and length of service.

Railways

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to encourage Network Rail to improve the conditions in *(a)* railway stations and *(b)* railway arches. [205546]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* There are approximately 2,500 stations on the national network. Network Rail owns all of these but directly manages only the largest 17. Any substantial improvements to these stations are currently specified by the Strategic Rail Authority and delivered by Network Rail. Over the past five years significant redevelopments have been delivered to several major stations. Recently completed projects include Leeds station which has undergone a £245 million modernisation to improve train capacity and passenger facilities; Manchester Piccadilly, where works costing £100 million to improve the station layout, accessibility, environment and roof were completed in 2003; and London Waterloo, where roof improvements completed in 2003 cost £41 million.

Examples of planned improvements include all Network Rail stations in London benefiting from increased CCTV coverage. In addition, the Scottish Executive are funding the design development phase of works to Edinburgh Waverley station, at a cost of £3.7 million.

Network Rail advises that it is continuing to manage and invest in its commercial arches portfolio. In the financial year 2003–04, the company invested £20.46 million in this area of the business and has budgeted £18.9 million for 2004–05 to upgrade its arch portfolio.

Network Rail will write directly to the hon. Member to outline its operational work in further detail and with specific reference to his constituency.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many crimes against a person have been committed at *(a)* rail stations that meet secure station status and *(b)* all other stations in each year since 1997, broken down by gender of the victims and incident type. [204718]

Mr. McNulty: The Secure Station Scheme was launched in 1998 with the aim of improving security and the perception of security at railway stations. The Scheme is optional, and once a station is accredited, the accreditation lasts for two years. Currently there are 168 stations accredited to the scheme.

In order to provide a detailed response to the question posed, the British Transport Police (BTP) have informed me that disproportionate levels of resources would need to be applied to conducting the research and analysis of the data. This would incur significant financial and opportunity costs. I am therefore unable to provide a full answer to the question.

However, BTP have provided a Force level breakdown, by gender, of crimes against the person for 1998–99 onwards.

Force wide

	Assaults		*Sexual offences*		*Robbery*		*Theft*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
1998–99	1,553	347	97	1,095	1,571	237	1,659	4,645
1999–2000	1,552	362	94	998	1,768	275	2,965	8,545
2000–01	3,583	1,150	89	1,064	2,164	314	2,940	5,262
2001–02	3,918	1,206	93	997	2,817	476	3,923	3,961
2002–03	4,800	1,294	84	862	2,188	370	7,519	8,416
2003–04	5,539	1,885	103	1,068	1,805	382	6,086	6,267

Notes:
1. Due to the changes in Home Office counting rules in recording crime, introduced in April 1998, data prior to that date are non-comparable.
2. BTP adopted the National Crime Recording Standards in April 2002 and this has contributed to the increase in recorded crime figures.

Road Accidents

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of road accidents involving *(a)* fatalities, *(b)* serious injuries, *(c)* minor injuries and *(d)* damages and in which a contributory factor was (i) alcohol, (ii) illegal drugs and (iii) legal pharmaceuticals in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [204959]

Mr. Jamieson: It is provisionally estimated that there were 560 fatalities, 2,580 serious and 15,870 minor injuries in 2003 as a result of accidents where at least one driver was over the legal alcohol limit. Information regarding damage-only accidents is not available.

Equivalent estimates of casualties in road accidents where the use of legal or illegal drugs was a contributory factor are not available, as routine accident reports do not currently record contributory factors to accidents. However, under a pilot scheme, information on contributory factors to road accidents has been collected by 15 police forces. The influence of drugs was recorded as a contributory factor in about 1 per cent. of injury accidents recorded under this pilot scheme in both 2002 and 2003.

Traffic Management Act

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the timetable is for *(a)* consultation and *(b)* implementation of regulations to be introduced in 2005 under the provisions of the Traffic Management Act 2004; [206301]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the costs that will be borne by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* gas, *(c)* water and *(d)* telecommunications companies in 2005 arising from the provisions of the Traffic Management Act 2004; [206302]

(3) whether he intends to exempt operations in non-traffic sensitive streets from permit schemes to be introduced under the Traffic Management Act 2004; [206303]

(4) what local authority administration costs are to be allowable in calculating the fee for permits issued under the Traffic Management Act 2004; and when he expects to announce the fee levels. [206304]

Charlotte Atkins: We hope to go out to consultation on proposals for permit schemes under part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, and on draft regulations under part 4 of the Act on various powers for local authorities to control utility street works including directing or restricting the carrying out of works, and for fixed penalty notices for certain street works offences, early in 2005. We will be starting work on regulations for other provisions in the Act during the course of next year.

We are still finalising the details of the new provisions, including permit fee levels, exemptions from the requirement for a permit and the possible cost implications of this for utility companies and others.

Train Horns

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will impose on train operating companies either a *(a)* mandatory modification of existing train horns or a *(b)* retrofitting of alternative train horns to reduce the decibel output of such horns to meet the Rail Safety and Standards Board's recent reduction in the minimum volume requirements in order that the train operating companies can recover the costs of such work; [206828]

(2) what discussions his Department has had with train operating companies regarding *(a)* modification of existing train horns and *(b)* retrofitting of alternative horns in response to the reduction by the Rail Safety and Standards Board of the minimum decibel volume required for such horns. [206829]

Mr. McNulty: There have been no discussions between the Department and train operating companies on the issue of train horns. The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is responsible for specifying the requirements for when and where train horns must be used and Network Rail is responsible for deciding how train operators comply with them.

Train Protection Systems

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which different train protection systems are in use; and what timescales are involved in moving to a fully comprehensive system. [204899]

Mr. McNulty: The Train Protection and Warning System and the Automatic Warning System are both fitted on a comprehensive basis across Network Rail's infrastructure. In addition, versions of British Rail's automatic train protection system are fitted on sections of the Great Western and Chiltern lines. The European Rail Traffic Management System is under development and scheduled to be trialled on the Cambrian line in 2007–08.

Transport Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the outcome was of the Transport Council held on 9 to 10 December; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [205188]

Mr. McNulty: A transport session of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council met in Brussels on 9 and 10 December. I represented the UK, together with Nicol Stephen of the Scottish Executive.

Following a debate on liability and compensation for damage from oil pollution at sea, the Presidency drew Conclusions. These incorporated wording which I had proposed, stressing the need to ensure that effective financial responsibility is exercised on the part of those involved in transportation of oil by sea, and the need for appropriate revision of the relevant provisions of the 1992 Civil Liability Convention (CLC) and the 1992 International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPCF). The UK wording was supported in the Council by several other member states.

The Commission presented a revised proposal for a Directive on market access to port services. I joined a number of other Ministers in expressing strong reservations about this proposal, which replaces the one rejected by the European Parliament following Conciliation. I pointed out that, while the UK welcomes liberalisation and market opening, some aspects of this new proposal would not help the port sector's development. It is far less satisfactory than the Conciliation text in a number of key areas. The proposal will have a major impact on the ports and shipping sectors, and there is a compelling case for further consultation with stakeholders and an extended impact assessment. These issues will be pursued in the detailed negotiation by the Council Working Group, which will now begin.

The Council reached Political Agreement on a Regulation introducing uniform application of the International Safety Management Code in EU member

states, and reached a General Approach on a Directive on recognition of seafarers' certificates. Both are acceptable to the UK. The latter corrects an imbalance between EU member states' recognition of certificates issued by other member states and the procedure required under the Convention of the International Maritime Organisation.

The Council reached a General Approach on a draft Directive on train driver licensing. The agreed compromise text allows individual member states to seek a 10- year derogation (which can be extended) from the licensing system for drivers working only on domestic routes in that State, should a cost benefit analysis show that its application to such drivers would not be worthwhile. This compromise reflects concerns, which I and others had expressed, regarding its application to those drivers—98 per cent. of the UK total. With those concerns met, I was able to accept the proposal.

The Council agreed Conclusions formalising the outcome of the Ministerial Conference on road safety held in Verona in October. The Conclusions, which are acceptable to the UK, stressed the need for co-operation and exchange of best practice between member states. The Commission informed the Council that it would review progress on the EU road safety action plan in 2005.

The Council reached a partial Political Agreement (Articles only) on a proposal for a Directive amending technical standards for inland waterway vessels, including passenger vessels. The agreed text is acceptable to the UK. When the Annexes have been agreed the Council can reach a Common Position on the proposal.

The Council agreed Conclusions on the movement to the deployment and operational phases of the Galileo satellite navigation programme. The Conclusions confirm the services to be developed within the programme. They also confirm: that Galileo should be a civil system under civil control; and that final agreement on the deployment and operational phases should be subject to a risk allocation, including final costs, which is acceptable to the public sector. The UK, supported by Austria, entered a minutes statement, stressing the importance for Council of giving its considered opinion on the results of the negotiations, in particular on the balance of risk allocation between public and private sectors, before the final contract is signed (probably in late 2005). In the expectation that Council's views would be taken into account, the UK was able to accept the Conclusions.

There was an oral progress report on a draft Regulation establishing a legal basis for the financing of the Galileo programme during the deployment and commercial operating phases.

The Council reached a General Approach on a draft Directive which transposes Eurocontrol's common licence for air traffic controllers into Community law. The text was acceptable to the UK.

The Council reached a partial Political Agreement (the Articles and Subparts O and Q of the Annexes) on a draft Regulation on harmonising technical requirements and administrative procedures in the field of civil aviation (EU OPS). Subpart O covers cabin crew training requirements and Subpart Q covers Flight Time Limitation rules. The agreed texts were acceptable to the UK. A Common Position can be adopted after agreement on the remaining Annexes.

Subject to a minutes statement that member states can improve their existing bilateral air service agreements, the Council agreed mandates for the Commission to open air transport negotiations with certain Western Balkan countries and with Morocco. These mandates are acceptable to the UK.

No votes were taken at this Council.

Young Persons' Railcard

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of *(a)* the terms of the Young Persons' Railcard and *(b)* the utility to young people seeking training or education of the Young Persons' Railcard. [205397]

Mr. McNulty: None. The Young Person's Railcard offers one third off a range of rail tickets and travelcards. A minimum fare applies in the morning peak. There are no current proposals to extend the scope of this Railcard or to introduce special arrangements for students. Local authorities can and do facilitate local schemes with the train operating companies for student travel to schools and colleges.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Care

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many day care places by each type of provider there were in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne in each year from 1996 to 2001; and how many registered child care places by each type of provider there were in *(a)* April 2003, *(b)* April 2004 and *(c)* October 2004. [202709]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* The information is not available in the form requested. The available information on child care places and nursery education places is shown in the tables. The available information on child care places, for Newcastle upon Tyne local authority area, is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Number[1,2] of registered child care places for children under eight years of age by type of care— Newcastle upon Tyne local authority area

Position at 31 March each year 2003 and 2004

Type of care	*2003*	*2004*
Full day care	1,400	1,800
Sessional day care	1,300	1,200
Childminders	1,600	1,700
Out of school day care	1,700	1,900
Creche day care	700	700

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100 places.

[2] Data Source: Ofsted

Table 2 Number[1,2] of day care places for children under eight years of age by type of provider—Newcastle upon Tyne local authority area

Position at 31 March each year 1997–2001

Type of provider	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Day nurseries	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,200	1,200
Playgroups and pre-schools	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300
Childminders	1,800	n/a	1,400	1,400	1,400
Out of school clubs	700	600	1,100	1,800	900
Holiday schemes[3]	1,100	1,200	1,200	5,100	[4] 3,600

[1] Rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Children's Day Care Facilities Survey.
[3] From 1999, places were counted once for each school holiday. Before 1999, places were counted once each year.
[4] Includes schemes that were exempt from registration.
n/a—not available

The figures for childcare places for 2003 and 2004 are not directly comparable with the day care figures for 1997–2001. The figures for 2003 and 2004 were derived from the Ofsted database of registered child care providers. The figures for 1997–2001 were derived from the Children's Day Care Facilities Survey, which was discontinued in 2001. There are no figures for 2002.

With the introduction of the National Day Care Standards and the transfer of responsibilities for registration and inspection of child care providers from Local Authority Social Service Departments to Ofsted in September 2001, child care places were classified according to the type of day care provided: full day care, sessional day care, childminder, out of school day care or crèche day care. Ofsted have produced figures based on this classification on a quarterly basis from March 2003. Their latest figures were published on 21 October 2004 in their report "Registered Childcare Providers and Places, 30 September 2004", which is available on their website, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications.

Up until March 2001, child care providers were classified according to the type of provider: day nurseries, playgroups and pre-schools, childminders, out of school clubs and holiday schemes. Figures based on this classification were published in a series of Statistical Bulletins, which are available from the Department's website, www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics.

The available information on nursery education places, for Newcastle upon Tyne local authority area, is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number[1,2] of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year olds Newcastle upon Tyne local authority area—Maintained schools and private, voluntary and independent providers of early years education

Position in January each year

1997–2004	Number
1997	5,000
1998	5,000
1999	4,900
2000	5,500
2001	5,600
2002	5,600
2003	5,300
2004	5,200

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Annual Schools Census, Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise and Early Years Census.

All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004. The latest figures on early education places for three and four year olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Departments website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Education (Lewisham)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many childcare places have been provided in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency since 1997. [201104]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested. The available information on child care places and nursery education places is shown in the tables.

The available information on child care places, for Lewisham local authority area, is shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Number[1,2] of registered childcare places for children under eight years of age by type of care. Lewisham local authority area

Position at 31 March each year 2003 and 2004

Type of care	2003	2004
Full day care	2,200	2,500
Sessional day care	800	700
Childminders	1,200	1,600
Out of school day care	1,300	1,600
Crèche day care	200	200

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Ofsted

Table 2: Number[1,2] of day care places for children under eight years of age by type of provider. Lewisham local authority area

Position at 31 March each year 1997–2001

Type of provider	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Day nurseries	1,440	[3]–	1,600	1,700	2,100
Playgroups and pre-schools	880	[3]–	960	1,000	910
Childminders	1,400	[3]–	1,200	1,200	1,200
Out of school clubs	950	[3]–	940	930	1,700
Holiday schemes[4]	960	[3]–	1,100	[5]1,000	1,700

[1] Rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Children's Day Care Facilities Survey.
[3] Not available.
[4] From 1999, places were counted once for each school holiday. Before 1999, places were counted once each year.
[5] Includes schemes that were exempt from registration.

The figures for child care places for 2003 and 2004 are not directly comparable with the day care figures for 1997/2001. The figures for 2003 and 2004 were derived from the Ofsted database of registered child care providers. The figures for 1997/2001 were derived from the Children's Day Care Facilities Survey, which was discontinued in 2001. There are no figures for 2002.

With the introduction of the National Day Care Standards and the transfer of responsibilities for registration and inspection of childcare providers from local authority social service departments to Ofsted in September 2001, childcare places were classified according to the type of day care provided: full day care,

sessional day care, childminder, out of school day care or crèche day care. Ofsted have produced figures based on this classification on a quarterly basis from March 2003. Their latest figures were published on 21 October 2004 in their report "Registered Childcare Providers and Places, 30 September 2004", which is available on their website, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications.

Up until March 2001, childcare providers were classified according to the type of provider: day nurseries, playgroups and pre-schools, childminders, out of school clubs and holiday schemes. Figures based on this classification were published in a series of Statistical Bulletins, which are available from the Department's website, www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics.

The available information on nursery education places, for Lewisham local education authority area, is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Number[1,2] of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year olds, Lewisham local education authority area Maintained schools and private, voluntary and independent providers of early years education

Position in January each year 1997

	Number
1997	4,300
1998	4,400
1999	4,900
2000	5,800
2001	5,900
2002	6,000
2003	5,900
2004	5,700

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Annual Schools Census, Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise and Early Years Census.

All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004. The latest figures on early education places for three and four year olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Exeter University

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment he has made of whether adequate alternative provision will be made for the undergraduate chemistry students if the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision proceeds as planned; and what discussions he has had with the Vice Chancellor of the university concerning such provision; [202624]

(2) what assessment he has made of whether adequate alternative provision will be made for the undergraduate chemistry students if the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision proceeds as planned; and what discussions he has had with the Vice-Chancellor of the university concerning such provision. [202656]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State has had no direct discussions with the Vice-Chancellor of Exeter University. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. However, I understand that the University is working closely with the students to ensure that all their individual needs are met. A number of universities have indicated they would be willing to accept students on transfer if appropriate. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is monitoring the situation closely.

Faith Schools

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many faith schools there were in England in each year since 2000, broken down by religion. [204985]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The requested information is given in the tables.

Maintained primary schools[1]: Number of schools by religious character—position in January each year: 2000 to 2004—England

	Number of primary schools				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No religious character	11,782	11,708	11,639	11,536	11,449
Church of England	4,523	4,509	4,505	4,493	4,482
Roman Catholic	1,752	1,747	1,733	1,724	1,723
Methodist	28	28	28	27	26
Other Christian faith[2]	47	47	48	49	50
Jewish	25	26	28	28	28
Muslim	0	2	2	2	2
Sikh	1	1	1	1	1
Other	0	1	1	1	1
Total	18,158	18,069	17,985	17,861	17,762

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Maintained secondary schools[1]: Number of schools by religious character—position in January each year: 2000 to 2004—England

	Number of secondary schools				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No religious character	2,967	2,899	2,871	2,850	2,819
Church of England	193	191	192	197	199
Roman Catholic	356	357	357	352	352
Methodist	0	0	0	0	0
Other Christian faith[2]	27	27	28	28	30
Jewish	5	5	5	5	5
Muslim	0	0	2	2	2
Sikh	1	1	1	1	1
Other	1	1	1	1	1
Total	3,550	3,481	3,457	3,436	3,409

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Family Resolutions Projects

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when CAFCASS first agreed the Family Resolutions project. [203941]

Margaret Hodge: The Family Resolutions Pilot Project is a DfES project. The pilot project was developed by a project steering group, led by a senior DfES official, which also comprises a senior judge, the chief executive of CAFCASS and a senior DCA official.

The development of a project was approved by DfES Ministers in December 2003. A design group, whose membership comprised DfES, DCA, CAFCASS, Relate, the Parenting Forum, a district judge and the Solicitors Family Law Association, worked until September 2004 to design the pilot project, reporting to the project steering group. The project is now in operation, for one year, from September 2004, in Brighton, Sunderland and Inner London.

Government-funded Agencies

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list *(a)* the resource budget, *(b)* staffing levels and *(c)* administration costs for each Government funded agency for which she has responsibility for each of the past three years; and if she will provide projections of these figures for the next three years. [204393]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department does not have any Executive agencies.

Keele University

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what discussions the Higher Education Funding Council for England has had with the University of Keele on proposals to close the University's physics department; [204047]

(2) if he will request that the Higher Education Funding Council for England discusses with the University of Keele the conclusions of its Science at Keele Review; [204048]

(3) if he will request that the Higher Education Funding Council for England contacts the University of Keele before the meeting of the University's Council on 16 December to discuss the reasons for the proposal to close its physics course; [204049]

(4) if he will request that the Higher Education Funding Council for England urgently assess the impact of the proposed closure of the physics department at the University of Keele on *(a)* access for students to basic science in North Staffordshire and *(b)* the economic and regeneration prospects of this sub-region; [204050]

(5) what discussions his Department has had with the University of Keele on its proposals to close its physics and astrophysics courses. [204051]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* Higher Education Institutions are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. In considering their future plans, including the Science at Keele Review, Keele university has discussed possibilities and implications with several interested bodies, locally and regionally, including the Higher Education Funding Council for England. They continue to be in regular contact. I understand that no final decisions on any proposals have been reached.

Schools (Asbestos)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each local education authority in England have been identified as having classrooms and other public areas containing asbestos; and what steps he is taking to ensure it is removed. [204663]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* There are no central records of the numbers of schools containing asbestos in England. However, as part of asset management plans, local education authorities record the presence of asbestos in the schools which they maintain. Other schools are required to keep their own records. Of approximately 20,400 primary schools and 3,400 secondary schools in the UK, some 13,000 were built between 1945 and 1974, when the use of asbestos-containing materials in building was at its peak. Many other school premises would have been refurbished during that period, providing the potential for the introduction of asbestos-containing materials. Schools constructed after 1999 will not contain asbestos building materials.

The new regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations; the duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises, came into force in May 2004. This regulation is designed to ensure that all those who have responsibility for the maintenance or repair of non-domestic premises manage the risks from asbestos materials on their premises.

Where asbestos-containing materials are in good condition and are unlikely to be damaged, HSE advice is that it is safer to leave the materials in place and manage them than to remove them.

Sefton Education Authority

Mr. Benton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Government have given Sefton education authority dispensation to remove the small schools funding formula. [205006]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The inclusion in an LEA's funding formula of a factor relating to small schools is a matter for local discretion.

I have, however, given dispensation for Sefton LEA to remove their small schools funding factor from the calculation of the minimum funding guarantee in respect of 15 schools. This dispensation was granted because the LEA demonstrated that by including it in the MFG calculation the 15 schools identified would have received an unfair budget share in 2005–06.

Special Schools (Gloucestershire)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the future provision of special school places in Gloucestershire. [203184]

Margaret Hodge: Under arrangements introduced in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the consideration of proposals to establish, alter, or discontinue maintained special schools are a matter for local decision.

Before publishing statutory proposals, the local education authority must formally consult all interested parties, including the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals, and the parents of pupils at those schools.

The authority must explain how interested parties can make their views known, and be able to demonstrate how they have taken into account the views expressed during consultation in reaching any subsequent decision. Once the local education authority has published proposals, there follows a two-month objection period during which anyone can submit formal objections to the authority.

Any formal objections must then be sent to the local School Organisation Committee. The Committee must give very careful consideration to proposals and reach properly informed decisions, based on all available evidence, including any objections received. If that committee is unable to reach a unanimous decision, it will pass the case to an independent adjudicator for determination.

Student Loans

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her latest estimates are of the numbers of students expected to take out fee loans in 2006 for the *(a)* standard fee and *(b)* variable element of the fee; and if she will make a statement. [205825]

Dr. Howells: The Government do not have a particular expectation of the pattern of fee charging by universities and colleges of higher education in 2006, nor of the proportion of students that will decide to take out a fee loan. We published estimates on the basis of a variety of different scenarios in the regulatory impact assessment that was published alongside the Higher Education Bill.

Sure Start (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children are involved in the Sure Start schemes operating in Pendle. [205008]

Margaret Hodge: There are three Sure Start local programmes in Pendle reaching a total of 2,083 children under the age of four. Sure Start Bradley and Whitefield covers 716 children; Sure Start Waterbridge covers 609 children and Sure Start Brierfield and Walverden covers 758 children under four.

Pendle has one Early Excellence Centre which serves 730 children and forms part of Walton Lane children's centre designated in September 2003. There are also four neighbourhood nurseries within Pendle providing a total of 134 new child care places.

Pendle has four children's centres to reach a total of 3,123 children under five: three of the centres have received approval to proceed from the Sure Start Unit and one centre was the early designation announced in September 2003.

All the Sure Start local programmes, neighbourhood nurseries and the Early Excellence Centre are involved in the delivery of the children's centre agenda.

DEFENCE

Air Cadets (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons air cadets attended cenotaphs in Pendle on Remembrance Sunday without their rifles; and if he will make a statement. [205010]

Mr. Caplin: Following a recent change in drill procedures, the Air Training Corps (ATC) issued specific instructions that all participants in Remembrance Day parades were not to carry drill weapons.

Before this change, the ATC followed the RAF's drill manual. The recent revision of this manual has rendered the ceremonial drill procedures and associated weapons used by the RAF unsuitable for ATC cadets.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what timescale he plans for the implementation of Tranche 3 of the Eurofighter Typhoon project. [205901]

Mr. Ingram: Under the Eurofighter Typhoon four-nation Memorandum of Understanding, contracts for the implementation of Tranche 3 do not need to be placed before 2007.

Future Rapid Effect System

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to what extent the changes to the Army's force structure is linked to preparations for the Future Rapid Effect System and the development of a medium force. [202987]

Mr. Ingram: The changes to the Army's force structure are underpinned by two complementary changes. The first is the move towards a more balanced force organised around two armoured, three mechanised, a light and an air assault brigade.

The second is making the Army more robust and resilient to the challenges of sustaining the enduring expeditionary operations that have become the norm in recent years. Strengthening our key enabling capabilities such as engineers, logistics and intelligence is vital to this work.

These structural changes will be supported by a re-equipment programme, which includes the Future Rapid Effect System (FRES). This will modernise the armoured vehicle fleet and will be key to our medium weight capability. In turn, it will enable us to address the current shortfall in our rapid deployment capability, which is set to become increasingly important in the emerging strategic environment.

FRES is but one element of our re-equipment programme. Other enhancements include new communications equipment such as Bowman and Falcon, enhanced intelligence collection assets such as Watchkeeper and Soothsayer, and modern vehicles such as Panther. Taken together, and along with the move toward a more balanced force, these equipments will help to ensure that our Armed Forces are optimally suited to face the challenges of the future.

Gulf War-related Illnesses

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up an ex-gratia scheme to deal with claims for Gulf War-related illnesses; and if he will make a statement. [204942]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not consider that there is a case or justification for making ex-gratia payments to 1990–91 Gulf veterans and thus giving one group of veterans more favourable treatment than others who served in different conflicts. Gulf veterans can and do receive compensation in the form of war pensions and attributable armed forces pensions which are already available to ex-servicemen who suffer illness or injury as a result of their service.

The number of veterans in receipt of war pensions or gratuities for unspecified, symptomatic Gulf-related illnesses is approximately 1,400, less than 3 per cent. of the personnel who served in the Gulf. Additionally, only some 100 claimants have failed to receive an award for Gulf-related illnesses, not the 272 stated in the recent report of the unofficial investigation by Lord Lloyd of Berwick. On 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 354, I announced that the Ministry of Defence will investigate and review these approximately 100 cases where they can be identified.

Military Clothing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the garment which the Minister of State indicated on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 156WH, had been tested by four separate test houses was a camouflage garment printed and manufactured in China. [205505]

Mr. Ingram *[holding reply 16 December 2004]*: The garment tests I referred to relate to the testing of fabric samples that were printed and manufactured in China.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, during his Department's assessment visit to factory 3533 in China, officials saw British Army camouflage fabric being *(a)* processed and *(b)* manufactured. [205506]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: Ministry of Defence personnel visited China as part of the agreed contract management plan. Under the terms of the contract, the prime contractor does not wish to publicly disclose sub-contractor information and I therefore cannot reveal the detailed information requested.

Personnel Surveys

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list recent surveys he has conducted on bullying in the armed forces, broken down by the date *(a)* carried out and *(b)* results were published; and if he will make a statement. [204036]

Mr. Caplin: The details of surveys since 2002 by the three services which include questions on bullying are as follows:

Naval Service

The Naval Service does not undertake a specific survey on bullying although the Naval Continuous Attitude Survey routinely carries questions on bullying along with issues concerning discrimination and harassment. These questions were agreed on a tri-service basis and have been common to all services since November 2002. Survey details are as follows:

Conducted	*Results published*
June 2002	September 2002
September 2002	January 2003
January 2003	May 2003
September 2003	December 2003
September 2004	Estimate March/April 2005

Army

The Army conduct Serving Personnel (SP) Continuous Attitude Surveys which cover a range of questions including bullying. Survey details are as follows.

Conducted	*Results published*
April/May 2002	March 2003
December 2002	December 2003
August 2003	April 2004
December 2003	August 2004
June 2004	Report in progress

The Army also recently carried out additional surveys as follows:

Survey title	*Conducted*	*Results Published*
TA personnel survey	May 2003	December 2003
TA personnel survey	September 2004	Report in progress

RAF

Details of the RAF Continuous Attitude Surveys since 2002 are as follows:

Conducted	*Results published*
2002	February 2004
2003	September 2004
2004	Summer 2005

The RAF also conducted the following specific surveys:

Survey/survey dates	*Reporting dates*
Racial Harassment, Racial Discrimination and Bullying	
1997	February1998
2001	May 2002
2003	November 2003
Sexual Harassment, Sexual Discrimination and Bullying	
2000	August 2000
2002	June 2002
2004	July 2004

Although the numbers of complaints of ill treatment are now small, the armed forces see no room for complacency and aim to confront unacceptable behaviour at every opportunity. The services' policy is

unequivocal: no form of harassment or intimidation will be tolerated and all allegations are investigated and appropriate action taken.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Under-Secretary of State and Minister for Veterans will respond to the letter of 16 November 2004 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding RAF Buchan redundancy payments. [206010]

Mr. Caplin: I wrote to the hon. Member on 6 December 2004, within our 15 working day target for answering ministerial correspondence.

Royal Navy Test Reactor

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the current status is of the dispute between the United Kingdom and the European Commission over the provision of data on the Royal Navy test reactor Jason in connection with its decommissioning since 1998. [204327]

Mr. Ingram: The case concerning the decommissioning of the Royal Navy's training and research reactor, Jason, was heard at the European Court of Justice before a Grand Chamber on Tuesday 12 October. The Advocate General published his Opinion on Thursday 2 December. It is expected that the Court will deliver its judgment in 2005.

Scottish Regiments

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which Scottish Infantry Regiments he has visited since 1 January 2004; and on what dates the visits were made; [201003]

(2) which headquarters of Scottish Infantry Regiments *(a)* he and *(b)* his Ministers have visited since 1 January; [201537]

(3) on which dates since 1 January *(a)* he and *(b)* his ministers have visited (i) Headquarters 2nd Division in Craigiehall, Edinburgh and (ii) 52 (Infantry) Brigade; and if he will make a statement. [201689]

Mr. Ingram: The Secretary of State has not specifically visited any of the individual Scottish Infantry Battalions, Headquarters 2nd Division or Headquarters 52nd (Highland) Brigade since 1 January 2004. He has, however, met personnel of a number of Scottish regiments during visits to operational theatres; for instance he has met members of the 1st Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's) while visiting Iraq in June this year. Most recently, on 8 December, the Secretary of State met personnel from the Scots Guards and the 1st Battalion The Black Watch, who were deployed in Iraq.

I have visited the rear party of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (The Highland Regiment) in Warminster; and the Regiment Headquarters and Associates of both the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's) and The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons) located in Stirling and Inverness respectively.

South African Nationals

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the level and type of assistance given by *(a)* the Army, *(b)* the Royal Air Force and *(c)* the Royal Navy to serving officers who are South African nationals and wish to apply for a British passport. [205465]

Mr. Caplin: There is no requirement for the Department to make representations to the Home Office on applications for British citizenship by foreign personnel, including South African nationals, serving in the United Kingdom Armed Forces. However, in the interest of the Service, and in support of individuals' careers, a small number of Royal Navy Commonwealth personnel are opting to apply for either dual or full British citizenship. The Royal Navy sponsors these applications on a case by case basis through an agreement with the Home Office.

Warship Support Agency

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the *(a)* gross operating cost, *(b)* net operating cost, *(c)* net cash outflow from operating activities and *(d)* cost of capital charge for the Warship Support Agency was in financial year 2003/04; [205450]

(2) when he intends to publish the Warship Support Agency Annual Report and Accounts 2003–04. [205449]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: The requested information is shown in the following table:

Warship Support Agency	*Financial Year 2003–04 (£ million)*
Gross operating cost	2,718,164,000
Net operating cost	2,666,932,000
Net cash outflow from operating activities	771,917,000
Cost of capital charge	246,576,000

These costs are taken from the Warship Support Agency's Annual Report and Accounts for Financial Year 2003/04, which have been audited and approved by the Comptroller General and are due to be published early in the new year. Copies will be placed in the Library of the House and will also made available on the Agency's Public Documents page of the Ministry of Defence's internet site.

Young Military Personnel

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many 16 and 17-year-olds are serving in *(a)* the Royal Navy, *(b)* the Army and *(c)* the Royal Air Force. [205682]

Mr. Caplin: I refer my hon. Friend to TSP (Tri Service Publication) 8: Age Distribution of UK Regular Forces at 1 April 2004 which was published on 19 May 2004. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Clergy (Employment Legislation)

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 applies to ministers of religion and their employees. [205381]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 enables the Government to confer rights contained in specified legislation on individuals who do not currently have such rights.

Coalminers' Compensation Scheme

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which 10 solicitors in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Scotland have received most money from her Department in respect of coal industry compensation claims. [204603]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 5 December 2004 the figures are:

	Solicitors—UK	*Costs paid (£ million)*
1	Thompsons	60.0
2	Hugh James Ford Simey	51.3
3	Raleys	41.3
4	Browell Smith	29.0
5	Mark Gilbert Morse	23.4
6	Beresfords	20.5
7	UDM	17.4
8	Graysons	16.7
9	Watson Burton	14.9
10	Towells	11.7

	Solicitors—Scotland	*Costs paid (£ million)*
1	Thompsons	17.0
2	Corries	4.1
3	McLeish Carswell	2.2
4	Morisons	1.7
5	McConville O'Neill	0.6
6	Campbell Smith W.S.	0.3
7	Ross Harper	0.2
8	Accident and Injury Claims	0.1
9	John Y. Robertson	0.1
10	Carr and Co	0.08

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure that widows due coal health compensation payments receive such payments before they die; and how many claims for such payments to widows are outstanding. [204604]

Nigel Griffiths: Proposals to expedite offers in deceased cases have been put to Sir Michael Turner, the judge who oversees the respiratory disease scheme.

As of 5 December 2004 there are just over 52,000 widows' respiratory disease claims waiting to be settled. Some of these claims will have received a widows' interim payment of bereavement award.

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will ensure that coal health compensation payments due to widows but not paid before they die are made to the widow's next of kin. [204605]

Nigel Griffiths: Scottish law does not allow for compensation of general damages (solatium) to be paid to the widow of the estate if the miner died before 16 July 1992. However, during the negotiations of the Scottish Claims Handling Agreement with the solicitors representing the claimants, the Department agreed that solatium could survive the miner and pass to the widow. In cases where the widow herself dies, it was not originally intended that the payments went to her estate. Nevertheless, the Department subsequently agreed that it would make ex-gratia payments to the surviving family where widows died between 1 May 1999 and 31 July 2002, as we acknowledged that there had been a backlog in setting up the process to handle claims.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with whom her Department has discussed the consequences of the coalminers' compensation scheme being an issued case. [204734]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department has discussed this matter with its external legal advisors.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she has taken to ensure that solicitors overcharging on the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme refund the Treasury. [204852]

Nigel Griffiths [holding answer 14 December 2004]: Any overcharging by solicitors must be dealt with by the Law Society. There is no question of solicitors overcharging either the Treasury or DTI.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the total of additional fees charged by solicitors under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme. [204853]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 14 December 2004]*: These figures are not held by the DTI.

Counterfeit Medicines

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she has taken to evaluate the risk to patients from counterfeited medicines in the medicines supply chain in the EU. [201644]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

The enforcement group of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are investigating suspected criminal offences involving the supply of counterfeit cialis and reductil via the legitimate supply chain. The route of access is one aspect of the investigation, but details cannot be disclosed while this investigation continues.

The date officers from the criminal investigation unit have discovered counterfeit cialis and enforcement action has been taken to remove them from the supply chain.

The MHRA investigates all allegations of counterfeit medicines in the United Kingdom, the vast majority of which are not associated with the tightly regulated legitimate supply chain. Action in the form of legal proceedings is taken if appropriate.

The MHRA routinely carries out market surveillance by sampling and testing medicines on the UK market for authentication. It is also consulting with pharmaceutical industry concerning technical developments in product security.

Action to prevent circulation of the counterfeit product includes a recall at patient level through the MHRA defective medicines reporting centre. MHRA inspectors and Royal Pharmaceutical Society inspectors have increased monitoring of product batch numbers during routine inspections of wholesalers and pharmacies.

Departmental Websites

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department's .gov.uk. websites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines adopted by the Government in 2001; and if she will make a statement. [199687]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 134W.

Employment Status Review

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the recommendations resulting from the Employment Status Review will be published. [205383]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We hope to publish a Government response to the Employment Status Review next year.

Energy Act

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice she has given to Ofgem with regard to section 83 of the Energy Act 2004. [205243]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: It is for Ofgem, which operates under the direction and governance of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (the Authority), to interpret its own statutory duties. However, the Government issued social and environmental guidance to the Authority in February 2004. The Authority is required to have regard to the guidance when discharging its statutory functions to which its principal objective and general duties apply.

Energy Supply

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the implications for the UK of the EU Directive on the Security of Energy Supply. [205362]

Mr. O'Brien: A Directive on Security of Gas Supply (2004/67/EC) was adopted in April this year. This establishes minimum security of supply standards and co-ordination of Member States' responses to threats to gas supplies and clarifies roles and responsibilities of market players.

There is also a proposal for a Directive on Electricity Security of Supply which, following agreement of a general approach by the November Energy Council, is now awaiting its first reading in the European Parliament. This requires Member States to take a range of measures to safeguard electricity supplies including setting minimum rules for network security and quality of supply standards, and establishing a market framework which provides a stable investment climate and investment signals.

We believe our existing arrangements largely meet the requirements of these Directives.

Fuel Poverty

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate she has made of the number of pensioners in Burton who are living in households suffering from fuel poverty; and how this number has changed since 1997; [205540]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of people claiming a disability benefit who are living in households suffering from fuel poverty in Burton; and how this number has changed since 1997. [205541]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We are unable to provide a breakdown of the number of households in fuel poverty by individual areas or towns.

For the most recently available survey figures, I would refer the hon. Member to the response which I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Malcolm Bruce) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 78W. This sets out how the Fuel Poverty figures for England are produced, and gives figures for each Government Office Region.

Those data also show that the number of fuel poor households in England which include someone aged 60 or over has more than halved from 2.2 million in 1996 to 1 million in 2001. In 2001, it can be estimated that the number of households containing either someone with a disability or long term illness was 0.8 million, the same as for 1996. Data for the number of those households in receipt of disability benefit are not readily available.

Due to the fact that 2002 figures are based on a modelled estimate, 2001 is the latest year for which it is possible to give these breakdowns.

Data for 2003 will be published in 2005 in the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy Third Annual Progress Report.

Gangmasters

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons the proposals by the Home Secretary relating to the regulation of gangmasters prior to the Morecambe Bay cockling tragedy were deemed not to be workable. [206085]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The question of how best continually to improve enforcement against those, such as gangmasters, that mistreat workers and act illegally has been and continues to be much discussed. During inter-departmental discussions on this issue in 2003 a number of different approaches from various departments were considered, rejected, modified and adopted. Such debate is a normal part of the process of government and is how departments reach a consensus on the best way forward. In this case the consensus settled on taking a range of actions, including Government support for a private Member's Bill, now the Gangmasters Act 2004.

Gas Prices

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the differential in wholesale gas prices between the UK and the EU on the *(a)* competitiveness of UK manufacturers and *(b)* economy. [199540]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: DTI officials and Ministers meet regularly with industry groups and companies to discuss concerns on energy prices. At a recent meeting with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, representatives of the main energy intensive sectors of industry confirmed that they were fully committed to the market-related approach to energy supply. However, they were concerned about prices in the forward market for gas in Great Britain. My right hon. Friend asked officials to maintain a close dialogue with the group, to get their ideas for improving the operation of the market, and to report back.

Maternity Leave

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will estimate the take-up rate of maternity leave entitlement with statutory maternity pay since the changes implemented in April 2003. [205056]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is possible to make an estimate of the numbers of women taking maternity leave based on employer returns to Inland Revenue for payment of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). Around 300,000 women receive SMP each year.

In addition, there will be some women who will qualify for maternity leave but not SMP (because they do not meet the earnings criteria) and similarly some who qualify for SMP but not leave (because they are employed earners for the purposes of SMP but not employees in order to qualify for leave).

Medicines (Packaging)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms are in place to prevent tamper-proof packaging on medicines being removed by commercial middlemen. [201723]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

The regulations covering the packaging of medicinal products make no reference to the use of tamper evident presentations. Any decision to use such packaging is for the marketing authorisation holder.

If a company authorised to carry out the repackaging of a medicinal product needs to remove tamper evident packaging, or seals, in order to repack the product, he is permitted to do so. However, repacking of medicinal products in the United Kingdom may only be carried out in accordance with relevant process and product-specific licences issued by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)—these permit only the outer packaging to be opened or replaced. The MHRA examines a sample of each product to be repacked and is aware of the instances in which tamper-evident packaging will be opened or replaced.

The immediate container may not be opened or replaced so where this uses tamper-evident packaging, it will remain intact.

Ministerial Visits

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list combined heat and power schemes which she has visited since taking her post. [205244]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the hon. Member for Tewkesbury (Mr. Robertson) on 18 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 894W.

Newspaper Distribution (Rural Areas)

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Office of Fair Trading about a block exemption from the EU competition legislation on newspaper distribution in rural areas. [205853]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Over the course of the past 18 months, DTI Ministers and officials have had discussions with the newspaper and magazine industry and with the Office of Fair Trading about the proposal to repeal the Order exempting vertical agreements from prohibition under UK competition law. The Government concluded this Order was no longer required and repealed it with effect from 1 May 2005. The Government's position on this matter was set out in their published response to the consultation which may be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/compmodresp.pdf.

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is now engaged in discussions with representatives from all sides of the newspaper and magazine industry to ensure the arrangements in place for the distribution of newspapers and magazines will continue to comply fully with domestic and European competition law after 1 May 2005. In the context of these discussions, I understand some parties have submitted arguments in favour of a new block exemption for exclusive distribution agreements between newspaper publishers and wholesalers while other parties have argued against such a move. DTI Ministers expect to receive advice from OFT on progress with discussions on these matters by spring 2005 at the latest.

Nuclear Energy/Nuclear Material

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the sections on *(a)* nuclear energy and *(b)* nuclear materials of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, published in December. [205518]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has welcomed the publication of the High-Level Panel report. The Government are now analysing all aspects of the panel's report including those recommendations relating to nuclear energy and nuclear materials. We will be discussing all aspects of the report with international partners over the coming months and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said, 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1514, the Government have long worked for the reform of the United Nations system and for that reason we greatly welcomed the publication of the report last month from the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level

Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. This report offered two options for reform of the Security Council, and also proposed new approaches to the use by the Security Council of its chapter VII powers, including a self-denying ordinance on the use of the veto in cases of genocide and large-scale human rights abuses, and observations on the use of force preventatively to stop latent threats becoming imminent. I shall reproduce the UN report as a Command Paper to the House, better to assist debate.

He also announced the publication of a command paper to encourage debate within the United Kingdom.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the role of nuclear energy in the UK meeting its Kyoto targets. [204826]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Our assessment is that current policies put the UK on track to meet its commitment to reduce greenhouse gases under the Kyoto protocol. In 2003, nuclear energy accounted for 4 per cent. of energy consumption. By 2010, we anticipate that this figure will fall to 3.5 per cent.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the question from the hon. Member for Birkenhead, reference 200988, tabled on 25 November. [206227]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I answered my right hon. Friend's question on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 225W.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Eddisbury on 29 November on the cost of printing her Department's five-year programme. [206129]

Ms Hewitt: I answered the hon. Member's question on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1052W.

Radioactive Waste

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her policy is on the European Commission's proposal for a council directive on the supervision and control of shipments of radioactive waste and spent fuel, COM (2004) 716 Final, published on 15 November. [202813]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government's position in response to the Council Directive will be set out shortly. The current draft raises a number of issues of concern in relation to the proposed extension of the Directive to cover the shipment of spent fuel for reprocessing and these are being explored further in negotiation of the draft text.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her Written Statement on the updated policy on intermediate level radioactive waste substitution of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 115WS, what assessment the Office of Civil Nuclear Security made of the possible opportunities this option may provide for terrorists to intercept or hijack high-level radioactive waste. [205512]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The movement of all civil nuclear material, including high-level waste, in the UK and anywhere in the world on board a UK-flagged vessel is carried out in accordance with the Nuclear Industries Security Regulations 2003 which are administered and enforced by the Office for Civil Nuclear Security.

The security standards to be applied to these movements to prevent sabotage or unauthorised removal depend on the category of the material and the threat at the time. Information and intelligence relating to potential security threats to such shipments is closely monitored. If a specific credible threat were detected, the shipment would not be allowed to proceed.

Renewable Energy

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will respond to the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution in its report, Biomass as a Renewable Energy Source. [205245]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1128W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian (David Hamilton).

Research and Development

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the change in the level of research and development funding has been since 1997, in *(a)* cash and *(b)* percentage terms. [206295]

Ms Hewitt: Between 1996–97 and 2004–05 net Government expenditure on research and development by Departments will have risen by *(a)* £2.869 billion in cash terms and *(b)* 49 per cent. in total, in percentage terms. The following table sets out expenditure since 1996–97, including planned spend in 2004–05.

Net Government expenditure on R&D by Departments in cash terms 1996–97 to 2004–05

	Total R&D (£ million)	*Increase on previous year (Percentage)*
Outturn		
1996–97	5,850	—
1997–98	5,908	1.0
1998–99	5,751	-2.7
1999–2000	6,119	6.4
2000–01	6,449	5.4
2001–02	6,774	5.0
2002–03	8,079	19.3
2003–04	8,580	6.2
Plan		
2004–05	8,719	1.6

Source:
National Statistics

Rural Subsidy (Post Offices)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has held with relevant agencies on extending the rural subsidy to post offices beyond 2008. [205458]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have not held discussions with any interested parties at this stage. DTI officials are co-ordinating work across Government on future options

for maintaining access to post office services for those living in rural communities beyond 2008. This work is still at an early stage, and it will need to take into account the outcomes from pilot work on new ways of delivering services for rural communities, which Post Office Ltd. is conducting. I have asked for a report on the outcomes from this pilot work by the end of 2005. Once the range of future options has been identified, my Department, working with Defra and the devolved Administrations, will ensure that views are sought from interested parties.

Science Budget

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the change in the level of the science budget has been since 1997 in *(a)* cash and *(b)* percentage terms. [206294]

Ms Hewitt: Between 1996–97 and 2004–05 the science budget will have risen by *(a)* £1.263 billion in cash terms and *(b)* 96 per cent. in total, in percentage terms. The following table sets out science expenditure since 1996–97, including planned spend in 2004–05.

Following the Spending Review 2004 science budget expenditure is planned to rise to £3.282 billion by 2007–08.

Science budget expenditure in cash terms 1996–97 to 2004–05

	Science budget (£ million)	*Increase on previous year (Percentage)*
Outturn		
1996–97	1,312	—
1997–98	1,331	1.4
1998–99	1,334	0.2
1999–2000	1,394	4.5
2000–01	1,514	8.6
2001–02	1,707	12.7
2002–03	2,032	19.0
2003–04	2,366	16.4
Plan		
2004–05	2,575	8.8

UK Trade and Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of UK Trade and Investment's budget is directed towards *(a)* inward investment and *(b)* trade promotion; and what plans she has to change each percentage. [203894]

Mr. Alexander: Figures from UKTI's published 2003–04 Resource accounts show UKTI's total resources at just under £289 million, of which some £250 million, (86 per cent.) was spent on trade development and the remainder, 14 per cent., on inward investment. UK Trade and Investment's existing corporate strategy provides for a strengthening of particular areas of activity, including inward investment. Subject to further work to determine the optimum distribution of resources, the terms of the SR2004 settlement envisage a larger proportion of spending on inward investment work by 2008.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

"Representative Claims: Proposed New Procedures"

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the outcome was of the consultation on "Representative Claims: Proposed New Procedures". [201652]

Mr. Lammy: The post-consultation report on 'Representative Claims: Proposed New Procedures' was published in April 2002. It showed overall support for the principles of representative claim. However, following a detailed analysis of the replies, it was concluded, that a generic provision would not meet the needs of the diverse areas where representative claims might be pursued.

Consequently, the Department for Constitutional Affairs has been working with other Government Departments and stakeholders on a more targeted approach. Specific provision can be made where this is required by EU legislation or where it would otherwise be beneficial to allow representative organisations and third parties to act and there is evidence to support the introduction of such a provision.

Absent Voters

Mr. Heald: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Department's policy is on political parties being supplied with absent voting lists outside an election period; and if he will make a statement. [204956]

Mr. Leslie: Electoral law provides for the list of absent voters for an indefinite or specified period to be made available for inspection by anyone at any time at the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)'s office. Further, EROs shall on request supply free of charge to each candidate or his election agent the list of absent voters for a particular election and those for an indefinite or specified period. The Representation of the People Act 1983 defines when a person can become a candidate which may be on the date of the dissolution of Parliament or, at a local election, on the last day for publication of notice of the election.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205138]

Mr. Lammy: My Department does not record staff time spent arranging and distributing Christmas cards. This information can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

David Davis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205139]

Mr. Lammy: A number of my Department's staff are responsible for ordering and distributing official Christmas cards. These staff are located in departmental offices and this information can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

David Davis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of official Departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205140]

Mr. Lammy: The cost of my Department's official Christmas card includes a 10 per cent. contribution to a registered charity. My Department's charity for 2004 is Shelter.

David Davis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205141]

Mr. Lammy: My Department does not separately record postage costs for distributing official Christmas cards.

David Davis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost was of purchasing official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205142]

Mr. Lammy: The costs of purchasing official Departmental Christmas cards are:

	£
2003	2,107.50
2004	2,502.91

David Davis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many official Christmas cards were sent out by the Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205143]

Mr. Lammy: The numbers of Christmas cards sent officially by the Department for Constitutional Affairs were as follows:

	Number of cards
2003	2,371
2004	2,620

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201697]

Mr. Lammy: Recruitment advertising within my Department takes place within Cabinet Office guidelines which ensures fair and open competition. In addition to local job centre adverts some campaigns are advertised in local newspapers, which proves effective in reaching all ethnic groups including Muslims. In addition adverts including some Senior civil service posts are placed in publications aimed specifically at different ethnic groups; The Asian Times, Eastern Eye, New Nation and Caribbean Times as well as being promulgated to Ethnic Minority Centres. Liaison and promotion of recruitment opportunities to Muslims (and other ethnic groups) within the Department also takes place via the Outreach scheme which involves visits to schools and local community groups. This and other linked work ensures that every effort is made to engage with all sections of the community including Muslims.

Devolution

Mr. Pike: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the benefits of devolution to the people of *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Northern Ireland. [204979]

Mr. Lammy: The aim of the Government's programme of devolution in Scotland and Wales was to decentralise power and to allow people to take decisions on important matters at a local level. Devolution has achieved this and has improved democratic accountability. As the devolved institutions bed down, the benefits of the distinctive opportunities, choices and results of devolution will continue to be realised across a broad range of areas in Scotland and Wales.

In Northern Ireland, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Irish Government are engaged with the political parties in a continuing effort to restore the devolved institutions on a stable and inclusive basis

Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204362]

Mr. Lammy: There are three gyms to which staff have access in the Department for Constitutional Affairs. These are:

DCA Headquarters, Selborne House

The Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand

Priory Court, Birmingham

The facilities at the Royal Courts of Justice and Selborne House are operated by the private sector and the facility at Priory Court is operated solely through membership fees. Consequently, no operational costs fall to the Department.

Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the Legal Services Commission evaluation of housing possession court duty schemes; and what plans he has for extending them beyond the existing pilots. [204941]

Mr. Lammy: The Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme has had a positive impact on outcomes for defendants facing housing possession orders, for the court service and for local service provision overall. In eight-nine per cent. of cases, possession orders were suspended, adjourned, dismissed or withdraw. Fifty-seven per cent. of clients using the scheme were found to have other problems, and were referred to other appropriate local services. The scheme has highlighted

particular problems facing defendants in possession order cases, such as tendencies among landlords to advise defendants that they do not need to attend court.

The service will continue where it is identified as a priority by individual Legal Services Commission regional offences. Provision of the scheme will be one in the range of services which each regional office can contract for from its overall budget for controlled work.

IT Contracts

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the *(a)* projected cost at the time of tender and *(b)* actual cost at the time of completion was for each IT contract commissioned by the Department or its predecessors in the last five years. [201614]

Mr. Leslie: For my Department, there are four relevant IT contracts. These are for Fujitsu Services; STL; Accenture; and Cable & Wireless.

(a) the projected costs of these contracts at time of tender are:

Fujitsu Services (magistrates' courts' IT systems) was tendered in July 2002 for £232 million over 8.5 years;

STL (magistrates' courts' IT systems): £38.5 million

Accenture (magistrates' courts' IT systems): £36 million

Cable & Wireless (for web-hosting): £1.5 million

(b) all these contracts are ongoing, so costs at time of completion do not apply. The current values of each of the contracts are as follows:

Fujitsu Services: £232 million

STL: £38.5 million

Accenture: £36 million

Cable & Wireless: £2.5 million

IT Systems

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the reasons are for the increase in the cost of running the Money Claim Online software systems between 2002 and 2002–03. [206072]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 365W. The running costs for Money Claim Online attributed up to March 2002 was for a period of three months. The cost for 2002–03 covered a period of 12 months.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost will be of rolling out the Exchange Hearing Information by Internet Technology scheme to every Crown court within the criminal justice areas in England and Wales. [206073]

Mr. Leslie: The cost of rolling out XHIBIT (exchange Hearing Information By Internet Technology) to every Crown court within the 42 criminal justice areas in England and Wales will be £20 million.

Legal Aid (Civil Cases)

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent on non-family legal aided civil cases in each of the last 20 years; how many cases involved *(a)* legal representation and *(b)* other legal advice and assistance in each year; and what the average costs of *(a)* and *(b)* were in each year. [204990]

Mr. Lammy: It is not possible to answer in precisely the way the question has been put because the Legal Services Commission does not hold information on the basis of cases but on the number and value of bills paid.

The following table presents the information requested on the basis of bills.

£ million

	Total civil non-family	*Representation*		*Advice and Assistance*[1]	
	Expenditure	*Bill volume*	*Average cost*	*Bill volume*	*Average cost*
2003–04	609	47,144	7,017	540,175	515
2002–03	674	62,880	6,414	566,321	478
2001–02	768	84,044	5,974	546,684	414
2000–01	669	108,013	4,876	518,910	275
1999–2000	671	115,714	4,570	804,101	176
1998–99	703	132,648	4,392	766,091	157
1997–98	692	155,737	3,764	800,591	132
1996–97	663	176,139	3,246	755,596	120
1995–96	596	182,192	2,805	737,782	115
1994–95	514	169,294	2,589	752,130	100
1993–94	455	167,115	2,267	794,602	96
1992–93	369	148,621	2,076	675,507	89
1991–92	276	129,529	1,780	544,964	83
1990–91	196	103,893	1,596	418,086	73
1989–90	163	96,894	1,425	396,068	62
1988–89	133	91,138	1,242	377,868	54
1978–88	110	83,620	1,060	411,242	51
1986–87	92	76,971	970	358,473	48
1985–86	82	73,001	904	341,312	46
1984–85	71	75,718	776	290,378	43

[1] Advice and assistance includes all other non-family civil legal help outside of certificated representation

MEPs

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures the Department has taken to ensure that the UK complies with the requirement that Members of the European Parliament shall not have a dual mandate with the legislature of a member state; and if he will make a statement. [206307]

Mr. Leslie: Council Decision 2002/772/EC provides that from the European Parliamentary Elections in 2004, membership of the European Parliament is no longer compatible with membership of a national parliament.

The European Communities (Definition of Treaties) (Common Electoral Principles) Order 2004, adopted this Decision into UK law, and came into force on 1 April 2004. Also, the European Parliamentary Elections (Common Electoral Principles) Regulations 2004 made minor consequential changes to the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002, so that it is in accordance with the Decision.

Parents Without Care

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what criteria have to be satisfied by a parent without care, where there is a failure of the parent with care to comply with the terms of a contact order, in order to qualify for legal aid; and what other forms of support the Department offers to such people. [205361]

Mr. Lammy: Legal aid is available for private law children cases, including contact disputes, subject to statutory tests of the applicant's financial means and the merits of the case. The means and merits tests apply to both parents with and without care.

The Government published a Consultation Paper; 'Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities' on 21 July 2004. It sets out a range of proposals designed to improve the help and support available to parents who are separated. The Government are now considering the responses received. The Government have already made clear their intention to bring forward new primary legislation to provide new powers to improve the facilitation and enforcement of contact orders.

Political Party Registration

Mr. Heald: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Department's policy is on individuals or organisations seeking to register a political party using words which are already a fundamental and necessary part of another registered political party's branding; and if he will make a statement. [204955]

Mr. Leslie: The registration of political parties' names is the responsibility of the Electoral Commission. Section 28 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 sets out the grounds on which the Commission may refuse to register a name.

Prenuptial Agreement

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate he has made of the percentage of divorce cases in which a prenuptial agreement is enforced in court. [205462]

Mr. Lammy: Pre-nuptial agreements are not legally enforceable at present, but the courts may consider the terms of such agreements when exercising their discretion in relation to the division of property on divorce. Figures on the number of cases in which the courts exercise their discretion in this way are not collected. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the cases where pre-nuptial agreements are an issue are rare.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the consequences for court time and costs of making prenuptial agreements binding. [205463]

Mr. Lammy: No assessment has been made. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that pre-nuptial agreements are rarely an issue in ancillary relief cases. It is, therefore, doubtful that any savings in court time or costs would be significant.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether he plans to make prenuptial agreements legally binding except where upholding an agreement would cause significant injustice. [205464]

Mr. Lammy: At present, couples are free to enter into pre-nuptial agreements, and abide by their terms on divorce, if they wish to do so. The courts can consider the terms of such agreements when exercising their discretion regarding the division of property on divorce. The Government believe that there would be difficulties in tying people into agreements made years before a divorce. The Government also believe that binding agreements would carry a significant risk of unfairness to either party in the event of a change in financial or other circumstances during the course of the marriage. The Government, therefore, have no plans to legislate to make pre-nuptial agreements legally binding.

Document Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what factors underlie the increase in the rate of files shredded by his Department since January 2003; and if he will make a statement. [202104]

Mr. Leslie: My Department continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act. The factor underlying the increase in the number of reviews conducted by the Department for Constitutional Affairs since January 2003 was the need to clear a backlog that had accumulated since 2001. The Freedom of Information Act has undoubtedly brought a renewed focus on good records management, and the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records under s46 of the Act recognises that the managed destruction of records is a proper and necessary part of efficient record keeping.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many day's sickness leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204505]

Mr. Lammy: The numbers of days lost to sickness absence are collected by the Department. The figures are contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based on. The most recent of which (for calendar year 2003) was announced by Written Ministerial Statement on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1WS and copies placed in the Libraries of the House. Reports for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/conditions_of_service/caje/publications/index.asp#sickness

The Department is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and in putting in place recommendations of the recently published 'Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector'.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) whether the Secretary of State has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in the Department since its implementation; [201296]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged. [201379]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the then Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203500]

Mr. Leslie: : No formal speeches have been made by Special Advisers in my Department.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask Parliamentary Under Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997. [203927]

Mr. Leslie: No.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203967]

Mr. Leslie: No.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204311]

Mr. Leslie: No departmental special advisers have appeared before parliamentary Select Committees since 1997.

Taskforces

Mr. Francois: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much his Department spent on taskforces and similar bodies in each year since 1997. [204878]

Mr. Lammy: The costs for taskforces and similar bodies in each year since 1997 are not separately identifiable within the Department's accounts without incurring disproportionate costs.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the measures to curb heroin production in Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [200028]

Mr. Rammell: The UK, as lead nation, is committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy. I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I made on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics, 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 17WS.

Bellis Report

Mr. O'Hara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library copies of the reports he requested from each Department on the steps that they have taken to implement the recommendations of the Bellis report of 24 November 2003. [203889]

Mr. MacShane: Follow-up to the report by Robin Bellis on "Implementation of EU Legislation" is on-going. Copies of a Synthesis report covering initial stakeholder responses and a subsequent Government Legal Service response on legal aspects have been placed in the Library of the House. Updated transposition guidance reflecting this analysis will issue in the new year. The hon. Member will have noted the joint measures announced in the pre-Budget report to ensure that businesses do not face unnecessary burdens from European law. This action forms part of a wider regulatory reform agenda which the Government are driving forward at the national and EU level.

Bolivian Natural Gas

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and Bolivia regarding its claim on the Atacama corridor in Chile, to secure sovereign maritime access for Bolivian natural gas. [204475]

Mr. MacShane: The Bolivian Government are well aware of the UK's longstanding position that this is a bilateral issue between Bolivia and Chile.

China

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he will take to seek greater protection for the Christian community in China. [205509]

Mr. Rammell: We are deeply concerned about religious freedom in China, monitor the situation closely and regularly raise our concerns about this issue, including the treatment of Christians with the Chinese.

At the latest round of the UK China Human Rights Dialogue, held in Beijing on 22 November 2004, we raised our concern that the prohibition of some religious groups and the restrictions and harassment of others undermines freedom of religious belief in China.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will intercede in the case of Father Zhang Rongliang a church leader arrested in Henan province to seek his release. [206040]

Mr. Rammell: The British embassy in Beijing contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 4 December 2004 to raise the case of Father Zhang Rongliang and register concerns about his health. We have also been in touch with the Dutch Presidency. We are making further enquiries about the circumstances of his arrest.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy towards the maintenance of the EU arms embargo against the People's Republic of China; and what representations he has received from *(a)* the People's Republic of China, *(b)* businesses, *(c)* Chinese organisations campaigning for democracy in China and *(d)* other EU countries and institutions, on this issue. [204214]

Mr. MacShane: The Government support the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China. This review is on-going—it was last discussed by EU Foreign Ministers at the 13 December General Affairs and External Relations Council. The Government do not wish to exclude any options for the review, nor to pre-empt the conclusion of the review.

In recent contacts with representatives of Her Majesty's Government, Chinese Ministers have expressed an interest in the review of the embargo. The Chinese Foreign Minister has raised the subject with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. I am unaware of any representations to him from business or Chinese NGOs on this question.The Government continue to implement the Arms Embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998.

China/Africa (Trade Deals)

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the major trade deals between China and African countries of which the Government is aware; and if he will make a statement. [204801]

Mr. MacShane: The Government do not comprehensively track trade deals between China and African states. But overall trade between China and Africa is becoming very significant, up from $2 billion for two-way trade in 1999 to $20 billion in 2003. We also value the contribution made to the Commission for Africa by the Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee member Ji Peiding.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [200843]

Mr. Rammell: The cost of providing the in-house catering service in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during the last two financial years was:

	£
2002–03	126,581.30
2003–04	184,201.59

The 2003–04 costs appear to be higher than the previous year, but these were significantly impacted by additional costs incurred during an expansion project on an existing catering facility. This project had the effect of temporarily reducing the level of business the contractor could carry out at the facility, and so a higher cost was incurred for the duration of the works.

Additional costs have been incurred in complying with the recommendations of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Food Procurement Initiative, promoting the, often, more expensive organic and sustainably grown produce. This is an on-going programme.

The cost for providing other catering in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during the last two financial years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Equipment Leasing

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by his Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [200850]

Mr. MacShane: The costs incurred within Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Supply Solutions—Purchasing under equipment leasing agreements over the last two financial years are as follows:

	£
Year 1—2002–03	445,760
Year 2—2003–04	465,618

These costs include the lease of standalone copiers within the UK, and lease arrangements on overseas vehicles.

Leased equipment held by FCO Services Home Estates are as follows:

	£
Coffee machine	
2002–03	1,284.42
2003–04	1,284.42
Vending machines	
2002–03	1,954.32
2003–04	1,954.32

Embassy Staff

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether non-EU nationals employed in residences of UK ambassadors and high commissioners throughout the world are required *(a)* to be entitled to work permits in the UK and *(b)* to have work permits in relation to the country in which the ambassadors, and high commissioners, residences are located; and if he will make a statement. [205524]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: Non-EU nationals employed in residences of UK Ambassadors and High Commissions do not have to be entitled to work permits in the UK.

The position of residence staff who are not nationals of the country in which they are appointed reflect that country's immigration rules and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Domestic staff of a head of mission who are employed by the sending state and who are notified to the receiving state's Foreign Ministry may, under Article 37(3) of the Vienna Convention, enjoy the same privileges and immunity as service staff of the Mission. In the UK, for example, individuals in this category would be granted 'exempt' from entry clearance. Domestic staff who are the private employees of a Head of Mission would have to apply and pay for a 'domestic' entry clearance, but would not require a work permit.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his recruitment policy is for staff who *(a)* prepare food, *(b)* serve food and fulfil other related hospitality and reception duties and *(c)* perform cleaning duties at the residences of ambassadors and high commissioners; and if he will make a statement. [205525]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: Residence staff are normally recruited in-country and; to the extent compatible with local law, enjoy the same terms and conditions as the local staff of the Mission. Operational considerations may sometimes justify the employment of British citizens or third country nationals.

EU Constitution (Referendum Campaign)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requirements there are for the declaration of receipt of EU funds by academics during the course of a referendum campaign on the EU Constitution; and if he will make a statement. [204179]

Mr. MacShane: When EU funds are made available to academies it is a requirement for the receipt to be made public in the academy's annual accounts. The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 does not place any additional requirements on academies to declare funding, whether this has been received during a referendum campaign or at any other time.

EU Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much EU funding was allocated to the Council of the Bar and Law Societies of the European Union in the last year for which figures are available. [204095]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply. The Council of the Bar and Law Societies of the European Union (CCBE) receives no EU funding towards its running costs.

However the CCBE have informed us that they sometimes participate in EU-funded projects aimed at promoting legal training and co-operation within Europe, usually in co-operation with other organisations. We do not hold information of the funding received by the CCBE in that context.

EU-China Arms Embargo

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the likely implications of ending the EU-China Arms embargo on *(a)* the UK defence industry and *(b)* trade with the United States. [204803]

Mr. MacShane: If the EU Arms Embargo on China were lifted export licence applications would continue to be assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, used for all applications. In particular an export licence would not be issued if there was a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for internal repression or external aggression.

The Government supported the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China. The Government are taking all relevant factors into account in the ongoing review—it does not wish to exclude any options for, nor to pre-empt the conclusion of the review.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 476W, whether the Government would be bound by a decision of the European Council to suspend the arms embargo against China; whether the United Kingdom can unilaterally impose an arms embargo on China; and if he will make a statement. [205325]

Mr. Straw: Any decision to lift the EU Arms Embargo on China would have to be taken by unanimous agreement of all EU member states, including the UK. EU control of defence equipment exports to China would continue to be governed by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. It is possible, irrespective of the existence of an EU arms embargo on a country, for a member state to impose a national embargo on that country (as is the case with the UK's embargo on Iran) although arms embargoes are very much more effective when applied multilaterally.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list changes to the English text of the European Constitution that have occurred since the Intergovernmental Conference, broken down by article. [204215]

Mr. MacShane: Following the June Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), the draft EU Constitutional Treaty (Command Paper 6289) was consolidated into a single document and drawn up in all the authentic EU languages. These different versions were scrutinised by specialist lawyer linguists, as occurs for every EU Treaty, to ensure there were no discrepancies between the different language versions without making any substantive changes to the text adopted at the IGC. The final text was published as Command Paper 6429. Listing such discrepancies by article would incur disproportionate cost.

Indonesia

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek a legal opinion as to whether the UN General Assembly resolution 2504, passed on 19 November 1969, precludes the UN Secretary-General from instigating a Review of the United Nations' own conduct in relation to the 1968–69 Act of Free Choice in West Papua; and if he will make a statement. [204271]

Mr. MacShane: The resolution does not preclude the Secretary-General from instigating a review. I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Douglas Alexander) gave to him setting out the Government's approach to an investigation of the Act of Free Will on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1550W.

We welcome Indonesian President Yudhoyono's undertaking in his inauguration speech on 20 October to protect the fundamental rights of the people of Papua and to implement the special autonomy law agreed in 2001.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what ministerial visits are planned for each Minister in his Department in the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [201276]

Mr. Straw: It is not my practice to announce visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events and for good reasons of security, final decisions on my, and Ministers', overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202564]

Mr. Straw: My Department endeavours to give a substantive answer to all Named day Parliamentary Questions (PQs) on the day specified and to all ordinary written PQs within five working days upon their publication in the 'Questions Book'.

In Parliamentary Session 2001–02, my Department answered 82 per cent. of Named day PQs on time and 82 per cent. of ordinary written PQs within five working days.

In 2002–03, my Department answered 74 per cent. of Named day PQs on time and 76 per cent. of ordinary written PQs within five working days.

In 2003–04, my Department answered 70 per cent. of Named day PQs on time and 86 per cent. of ordinary written PQs within five working days.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office only started recording the time taken to answer ordinary written questions in October 2001.

Resignations (Misconduct)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairshow many locally engaged staff have been dismissed or resigned as a consequence of misconduct in each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement. [205523]

Mr. MacShane: The rights of local staff are protected by the employment law of the country in which they are appointed. Missions are not required to report to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the number and circumstances of local staff dismissals and resignations. To obtain this information from every post in the world would incur disproportionate cost.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Foreign Service staff have been dismissed or resigned as a consequence of misconduct in each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement. [205527]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* One Foreign and Commonwealth Office officer was dismissed for misconduct in 2002, five in 2003 and three in 2004 (to date).

In 2002 and 2004 no officers resigned with outstanding misconduct allegations made against them. In 2003 one officer resigned after allegations of misconduct were made but before it was decided if the allegations should be upheld.

Spratly Islands

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and *(a)* China, *(b)* Taiwan, *(c)* Vietnam, *(d)* Malaysia and *(e)* the Philippines regarding territorial claims on the Spratly Islands. [204473]

Mr. MacShane: The status of the Spratly Islands is an issue for the parties disputing sovereignty to resolve. The Government welcomes regional confidence building measures and commitments to find a peaceful resolution to the dispute.

Sudan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of recent reports of *(a)* attacks on aid convoys in Darfur and *(b)* aerial bombings by the Sudanese military in Darfur; when he last raised these matters with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Sudanese Government; and if he will make a statement. [204640]

Mr. Mullin: On 12 December, two Save the Children UK (SC(UK)) national staff were tragically killed when a convoy of three clearly marked SC(UK) vehicles was attacked. On 13 December, our Ambassador in Khartoum raised the attack with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs. He also offered our condolences to the Save the Children UK Programme Director in Sudan. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) will be writing to the Head of SC(UK) to express this Government's sympathy. African Union monitors reached the site quickly; initial reports indicate that Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) rebels are responsible for the attack. I understand that SC(UK) has suspended its operations in South Darfur until further notice.

On 23 November, our Ambassador in Khartoum raised with the Government of Sudan reports that it had used its air force in response to an SLA attack on Tawilla on 22 November. He made it clear that such attacks violated the Government's commitment in the Abuja Security Protocol to "refrain from hostile military flights in and over Darfur".

On 6 December, at a meeting in London with the Humanitarian Affairs Minister, I pressed him on the need for the Government of Sudan to abide by this and other commitments it has made, particularly the Abuja Security Protocol.

Taskforces

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204884]

Mr. Rammell: Details of taskforces and similar bodies are not recorded centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and for this reason the cost of these activities could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Uganda

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the meetings held in the last 18 months between *(a)* himself, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* UK representatives in Uganda and (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of Uganda in which the situation in (A) the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and (B) the Democratic Republic of Congo in general has been (1) the main topic on the agenda and (2) a major topic on the agenda; what proposals *(x)* he, *(y)* members of his Department and *(z)* UK representatives in Uganda made for the involvement of Uganda in stabilising the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo; how these proposals were met by (aa) members and (bb) representatives of the Government of (I) Uganda and (II) the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [203815]

Mr. Mullin: We regularly discuss the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with the Ugandan Government. I last raised the subject with President Museveni and the Acting Foreign Minister during my visit in August.

We will continue to remind Uganda of its obligations to respect the territorial integrity of the DRC following withdrawal of its troops from Ituri province in June 2003, and to encourage it to play a constructive role in building peace in the Great Lakes region.

TREASURY

Inland Revenue/HM Customs and Excise Merger

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many redundancies he expects there will be when the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise are merged; and if he will make a statement. [205219]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government is committed to achieving efficiencies that will result in a gross reduction of 16,000 posts in the merged Department by 2008, following the report by Sir Peter Gershon. Efficiencies generated by bringing the two departments together are expected to account for around 3,200 of the total. It is too early to say what effect the changes will have on any particular location. We will be exploring all options to redeploy and retrain staff and are committed to working with Trade Unions.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy to bring Customs and Excise under the remit of The General and Special Commissioners of Tax. [205413]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the White Paper issued in July 2004 by the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, "Transforming Public Services: Complaints, Redress and Tribunals". This sets out the Government's plans for The General and Special Commissioners of Income Tax and for the VAT and Duties Tribunal.

Alcohol-related Deaths

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for how many deaths within *(a)* North Southwark and Bermondsey and *(b)* the London borough of Southwark alcohol was found to be a primary cause in each of the last five years. [205547]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Simon Hughes, dated 20 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for how many deaths within *(a)* North Southwark and Bermondsey and *(b)* the London Borough of Southwark, alcohol was found to be a primary cause in each of the last five years. (205547)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. The attached table shows the numbers of deaths among residents of North Southwark and Bermondsey parliamentary constituency and the London Borough of Southwark where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1999 to 2003.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] for North Southwark and Bermondsey parliamentary constituency and the London borough of Southwark[2] 1999 to 2003[3]

	Number of deaths	
	North Southwark and Bermondsey	Southwark
1999	11	28
2000	18	40
2001	15	38
2002	13	29
2003	16	36

[1] For the years 1999–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed as follows:
291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol
[2] Usual residents of these areas.
[3] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.
For the years 2001–03 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol
The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:
Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. Health Statistics Quarterly 17, pp 5–14.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in the constituency of Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber *(a)* would have been eligible for the Child Trust Fund in 2004 and *(b)* he estimates will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund in 2005, based on the actual figures for live births between 2002 and 2004. [205852]

Mr. Timms: All children born since 1 September 2002 in families awarded child benefit will receive a Child Trust Fund. In 2005–06 around 700,000 families will benefit from the Child Trust Fund across the country as a whole. No exact estimate is available for the number of children benefiting in Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber in 2004 or 2005. However, there were 816 new births in Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber in 2002, and 920 new births in the area in 2003. Provisional figures for 2004 to date show 920 new births in the area.

The CTF is intended to encourage parents and children to develop the savings habit. It will ensure that every child, whatever their family background, will have access to a stock of assets from the age of 18, so they can invest in their future.

It will also help children and their parents to understand the benefits of saving and investment and how to engage with financial institutions.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004; [205168]

(2) how many Departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards; [205169]

(3) what percentage of official Departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution; [205170]

(4) what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205171]

(5) what the cost was of purchasing official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205172]

(6) how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205173]

Mr. Timms: It is difficult to disaggregate the staff time spent preparing and sending Christmas cards, but across the Treasury the costs are minimal.

The Treasury procures its Christmas cards from the charity Card Aid. A third of the price of each card (23 pence) goes to the charity. In 2003 the Treasury procured 12,700 cards at £11,640, excluding VAT, and to date in 2004 the Treasury has purchased 10,714 cards at £9,852. Those costs are exclusive of VAT and include printing, packaging and delivery. Information in relation to the cost of postage is not available.

Coal Mining

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what consideration he has given to fiscal incentives to assist the coal mining industry in *(a)* flue gas desulphurisation and *(b)* clean coal technology. [205050]

John Healey: The Government's approach to using fiscal instruments for environmental measures is set out in "Tax and the environment: using economic instruments" which was published alongside the Pre-Budget Report 2002 and available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D54/07/adtaxenviron02-332kb.pdf. The Government consulted earlier this year on the development of a Carbon Abatement Technology Strategy and supports investment through the Cleaner Coal Technology Programme. The Government has no plans to introduce fiscal incentives for flue gas desulphurisation or clean coal technology, although these are kept under review.

Combined Heat and Power Schemes

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much financial support has been directed to combined heat and power schemes as a result of *(a)* the enhanced capital allowances programme and *(b)* business rates exception in each year from 2001 to 2003. [205242]

John Healey: The amount of Enhanced Capital Allowances claimed on combined heat and power (CHP) schemes is not separately identified on tax returns. The estimated cost to the exchequer for the enhanced capital allowances for all energy saving equipment (including good quality CHP) introduced in 2001 is set out in Table A2.1 page 150 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 2001. Business properties are generally valued as a whole and it is not possible to separate out the effect of business rate exemptions to CHP plants. This information is not routinely collected.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [202494]

Mr. Timms: The cost of in-house staff restaurant and associated facilities was £183,165 in 2002–03 and £193,185 in 2003–04. My hon. Friend's reply on 9 April 2003, *Official Report*, column 270W to the hon. Member gave a cost for other catering services during 2001–02 of £198,048. Comparable figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are not available due to the introduction of a new accounting system. However, this information will be available for future years.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by his Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202500]

Mr. Timms: Equipment under lease by the Department entered into within the last two years are:

Description	*Use*	*Lease Start Date*	*Lease End Date*	*Estimated Annual Charge (£)*
Xerox DC470ST	Scanning/Photocopying/Printing	December 2003	July 2005	5,276
Xerox Docucentre	Scanning/Photocopying/Printing	February 2003	July 2005	3,732
Franking Machine	Postage	January 2004	January 2010	1,500
Photocopiers × 4	Scanning/Photocopying/Printing/Colour finishing	June 2004 and Nov 2004	May 2007 and Oct 2007	16,000

Departmental Policies

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, including statistical information relating as directly as possible to the constituency, the effect on Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency of his Department's policies since 8 June 2001. [206838]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a radical programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. There is significant evidence that these policies have already yielded considerable benefits for the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by over 50 per cent., and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have fallen by 80 per cent. Looking more specifically at improvements since the 8 of June 2001, the beginning of our second term in government, claimant unemployment has fallen by a third, long-term

unemployment overall has fallen by 50 per cent. and long-term youth unemployment has fallen by almost 40 per cent. In November 2002 2845 families were benefiting from the Working Families' Tax Credit; by January 2004 4000 working families were benefiting from more than the family element of Child Tax Credit, an increase of 41 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at Parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

ECOFIN

Mr. Hood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the outcome was of the ECOFIN Council held on 16 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [199751]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I attended ECOFIN Council on 16 November in Brussels.

The Council held a policy debate on the main issues raised in the review of the EU's Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). The Council requested the EFC to continue work on the following issues in light of the debate: Taking account of the economic cycle when using fiscal policy; better definition of the national medium-term budgetary objective; making the debt criterion more operational; improving the implementation of the excessive deficit procedure; taking structural reforms into account; and improving governance.

The Council welcomed the report by Eurostat on Greece's deficit and debt data for the period since 1997, in light of the recently revised data. Ministers stated their intention to return to the question of accountability and possible future action to prevent the re-occurrence of such an event, based on a Commission report. Ministers mandated the EFC to examine such a report closely and report to ECOFIN. Ministers will also assess the excessive deficit situation of Greece at the earliest opportunity based on a Commission recommendation. Ministers encouraged the Greek authorities to live up to their commitment under the excessive deficit procedure to take sufficient corrective measures.

The Council held an orientation debate on the Commission's proposals for modifying, under the EU's financial framework for 2007–13 period, the system of own resources for the financing of the EU budget and the mechanism used for the correction of excessive net budgetary imbalances by member states. There were no Council Conclusions. The Presidency noted that: a broad majority of delegations were in favour of the current arrangements but with some technical improvements, such as the idea of switching to a GNI-based system moving away from the current system based in part on member states' shares of a notional VAT-base; an overwhelming majority of delegations did not support the Commission's idea of introducing a new tax-based EU own resource; and that a broad spectrum of views were expressed on the Commission's proposal for the establishment of a generalised correction mechanism. I set out the Government's position on the Commission's proposals, noting that the expenditure proposals were unacceptable that the UK's position for a budget of no more than 1 per cent. EU GNI was clear and that the focus needed to be on what the EU spends its money on. I also stressed that the UK abatement remained fully justified.

The Council broadly welcomed the Report of the High Level Group chaired by Mr. Wim Kok. The Council agreed conclusions that stressed particularly: achieving higher growth and employment; reforms aimed at accelerating Europe's employment and productivity growth; political ownership and leadership; the central role of the BEPGs (Broad Economic Policy Guidelines) and of multilateral surveillance; and increasing accountability, for example through 'benchmarking'. The Council agreed the direction of the Lisbon strategy 'is right and imperative, but much more urgency is needed in its implementation'. The Council will closely examine the proposals to be presented by the Commission on the mid-term review, and invited the Economic Policy Committee (EPC), in this regard, to assist it in the preparation of its contribution to the 2005 Spring European Council. In this context, the UK highlighted the Wood Review and its messages for European Public Procurement.

The Council adopted conclusions without debate on financial integration and the review of the Lamfalussy framework. These conclusions highlight that the Council considers, on the basis of initial evidence, the Lamfalussy framework to have been successful in meeting its key objectives. The Council, on financial integration, concluded that 'all future legislative proposals be accompanied by thorough impact assessment'.

The Council took note of a presentation by the Commission of legislative proposals aimed at simplifying business obligations relating to value added tax. The Presidency indicated the Council should look broadly favourably at this proposal.

The Council reached a political agreement on a proposal for a Regulation on controls of cash entering or leaving the Community. The agreement was reached by qualified majority, with only the Italian delegation voting against. The Council decided to set at 10,000 euros the threshold above which individuals will be required to declare cash when crossing the EU's external frontiers.

The Council briefly discussed the issue of reduced rates of value added tax and agreed to re-examine the dossier at its meeting on 7 December.

The Council was briefed by the Commission and by the President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) on implementation of the European Action for Growth launched by the European Council last December.

A meeting also took place between EU Ministers and Candidate Countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey). Ministers discussed the structural challenges facing the Candidate Countries on the basis of an EPC report.

Mr. Jimmy Hood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the outcome was of the ECOFIN Council held on 7 December 2004; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [204722]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Jon Cunliffe, Managing Director of Macroeconomic Policy and International Finance, represented the UK at ECOFIN.

The Council took note of a report by the Commission on the issue of accountability as regards revisions by Greece of data it had previously provided for the assessment of its budgetary situation and of a report by Eurostat on the revision of the figures. The Council also took note of the Commission's decision to launch an infringement procedure as a practical consequence of its accountability report. The Council will return to the issues of how to improve the governance in the European statistical system early next year. Council agreed conclusions without debate.

The Commission and the European Central Bank presented the 2004 convergence reports on the economic performance of the 11 member states with a derogation from the Euro—this does not include the UK. The report included for the first time an assessment of the 11 new members states' progress towards adoption of the euro. The Commission noted none of the 11 member states with fulfilled the conditions for Euro entry. Council took note of this presentation.

The Presidency concluded that most member states thought the progress report on the EU's financial framework for 2007–23 was a useful contribution to the European Council, and that the building blocks broadly represented the range of member states' opinions. ECOFIN highlighted the need to respect national processes of fiscal consolidation in determining the EU budget for the next period, as well as the principles of EU value added, proportionality and solidarity. There was also a general view that the particular needs of the new member states should be fully taken into account, and that revenue would need to be part of the final overall package.

The Council took note of the presentation by Mr. Gijs de Vries, EU Counter- Terrorism Coordinator, of a strategy document prepared by the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and by the Commission on prevention of the financing of terrorists and terrorist groups. The paper was approved and it was agreed to forward the document to the General Affairs Council with a view to the European Council meeting on 16 and 17 December. The strategy provides an overview of the EU's actions to date and a number of recommendations on how they might be further strengthened.

The Council agreed a general approach on a proposal for a Directive aimed at preventing the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing. It asked the Presidency to engage contacts with representatives of the European Parliament with a view to enabling the Directive to be adopted in first reading.

The Council agreed a general approach on two directives which will implement the Basel II Accord adopted by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision. The proposals modernise capital adequacy requirements for banks and investment firms, significantly improving the existing rules. The Council requested the Presidency continue contacts with representatives of the European Parliament in order to explore the possibility of adopting the directives in the first reading.

The Council agreed a general approach on a proposal for a Directive aimed at improving the reliability of company financial statements by establishing minimum requirements for the audit of company accounts. It asked the Presidency to engage contacts with representatives of the European Parliament with a view to enabling the Directives to be adopted in first reading. The draft directive introduce a number of provisions in order to better ensure independence amongst statutory auditors and audit firms.

The Council was briefed by the Presidency on the follow-up given to conclusions adopted at its meeting on 21 October regarding the potential burden on business of compliance with EU legislation and regulations. The six Presidency Initiative on Regulatory Reform was launched. This initiative spanning the Presidencies of Ireland, Netherlands, Luxembourg, UK, Austria and Finland, contains proposals to promote a better regulatory framework in the EU.

The Council examined a draft Directive aimed at changing the place of taxation to the place of consumption for business to business supplies of services. Discussion focused on the early entry into force of the Directive and on provisions relating to the long-term leasing of motor vehicles. The Council requested the incoming Luxembourg Presidency to consult further on these issues and to report back at a future meeting with a view to enabling it to reach an agreement.

The Council took note of the intentions of the Luxembourg and United Kingdom delegations to put forward suggestions concerning the organisation of work on the issue of VAT reduced rates during their forthcoming Presidencies. The Council also took note of the presentation by the Commission of a note on the issue.

Jon Cunliffe, Managing Director of Macroeconomic Policy and International Finance, represented the UK

Exports (Manufactured Goods)

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate his Department has made of the *(a)* value and *(b)* percentage of exports which comprised manufactured goods in the last year for which figures are available. [206038]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Brian Donohoe, dated 20 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about exports of manufactured goods. I am replying in his absence. (206038)

The latest published information is for October 2004 when UK exports of manufactured goods were estimated at £13.2 billion on a seasonally adjusted Balance of Payments basis. This represented 55% of total exports of goods and services for the same month, which were estimated at £24.1 billion.

These estimates were published on 9 December. They may be found in Tables A13 and A1 of the Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics, which is available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=61

Financial Services Ombudsman

Mr. David: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how long on average it took the Financial Services Ombudsman to investigate complaints in the last year for which figures are available. [206860]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Ombudsman Service's Annual Review of the year 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 states that the average time taken to resolve a complaint by guided mediation, an informal settlement process, was four months. Cases where either party to the dispute requests a more formal review in order to settle the dispute took on average nine months

In this period, the Financial Ombudsman Service received a total of 97,901 complaints which were referred to adjudicators. The Service resolved 47 per cent. of these complaints within three months, 79 per cent. within six months and 91 per cent. within nine months.

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Hayes: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a list of documents held by his Department that *(a)* may be disclosed under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and *(b)* have been destroyed within the preceding four months that pertain to (i) the European Constitution and (ii) the criteria for acceding to the euro. [204461]

Mr. Timms: The Freedom of Information Act establishes a general statutory right of access to information. Once implemented, on 1 January 2005, a person who writes to a public authority and asks for information will have the right to be told whether or not the authority has the information and, if so, to have that information communicated to him, subject to clearly defined exemptions.

Every piece of information held must be considered individually. To consider every document held pertaining to the European Constitution and the criteria for acceding to the euro, and to identify which might be disclosed, could only be achieved at disproportionate cost.

HM Treasury keeps records for as long as they are needed for administrative and business purposes. Records of enduring historical value are selected for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of the National Archives, on the basis of guidelines which are published on the National Archives website at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/.

Gross Domestic Product

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues regarding the level of net taxes and social security contributions as a proportion of gross domestic product. [205997]

Dawn Primarolo: The Chancellor of the Exchequer regularly has discussions with Cabinet colleagues on public finance issues.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the *(a)* proportion, *(b)* percentage and *(c)* value of gross domestic product that is contributed by the manufacturing industry. [206039]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Brian Donohoe, dated 20 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on what the latest estimate is of the *(a)* proportion, *(b)* percentage and *(c)* value of gross domestic product that is contributed by the manufacturing industry. (206039)

Manufacturing comprised 15.7 per cent. of gross value added in 2003. This represents a contribution of £152.8 billion.

The contribution of industries to the economy is normally shown by their contribution to GVA. The difference between GVA and gross domestic product is taxes less subsidies on products (e.g. VAT, excise duties) which cannot be allocated across industries.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202502]

Mr. Timms: No case has been brought against HM Treasury wholly or chiefly under the Human Rights Act 1998.

Income Tax (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people living in the London borough of Wandsworth pay income tax at *(a)* the basic rate and *(b)* the higher rate; and if he will make a statement. [205912]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to tables 3.11 'Income and tax by region and country' and 3.14 'Total income by borough and district or unitary authority' on the IR website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu.htm.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205804]

Mr. Timms: The number of staff in HM Treasury to *(a)* receive official warnings and *(b)* face disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	Warnings	*Disciplinary action*
1997	1	1
1998	0	0
1999	1	1
2000	3	5
2001	1	1
2002	1	1
2003	[1]0	1
2004	4	4

[1] The member of staff resigned during the disciplinary investigation

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201419]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201443]

Mr. Timms: All Special Advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203461]

Mr. Timms: Special Advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203492]

Mr. Timms: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203919]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203959]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (David Miliband) on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1258–59W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204299]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the former Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204319]

Mr. Timms: Ed Balls sometimes accompanied the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Treasury Committee hearings.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate has been made of the revenue expected from stamp duty land tax on commercial leases in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [206144]

Mr. Timms: Estimates of the revenue from stamp duty were published in Table B13 of the Pre Budget 2004 Report. http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/92C/40/pbr04_chapB_320.pdf. No reliable further breakdown is available.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what mechanism is used to ensure that stamp duty collected by conveyancers is not collected in error in relation to properties that are subject to exemption; and if he will make a statement. [206306]

Mr. Timms: Disadvantaged Areas Relief from Stamp Duty Land Tax is due only if a valid claim is made in a Stamp Duty Land Tax Return or an amendment to such a return. The Inland Revenue provides advice, including a postcode search tool, on its website to help taxpayers and their professional advisers to decide whether they should claim.

Tax Credits

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the processing of tax credit claims. [205586]

Dawn Primarolo: Over 6 million families are now benefiting from tax credits and 10 and a half million children are benefiting.

The tax credits computer system captures data from claims, checks entitlement, calculates tax credit awards, sends out a decision notice and makes payments automatically.

The Inland Revenue aim to decide 55 per cent. of all tax credit claims, renewals and change of circumstances in five working days and 95 per cent. in 30 working days. It published its progress against Public Service

Agreement (PSA) targets in the Board's Annual Report, published in October 2004, which is available on the internet at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many interim giro payments for tax credits were made by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year; and how many of these were made (i) to prevent hardship following the reduction of an award and (ii) as manual payments of tax credits. [205936]

Dawn Primarolo: For 2003–04, the numbers are shown at paragraph 2.14 in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General attached to the Inland Revenue Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004.

Between April and November 2004 inclusive, about 280,000 manual payments were issued, of which about 3,000 were to prevent hardship following the reduction of an award.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Inland Revenue expects to introduce fully automated reconciliations of payments authorised against payments made with regard to the processing of tax credits. [205938]

Dawn Primarolo: A new reconciliation arrangement was introduced in August 2004. While not fully automated it allows us to ensure we complete the 2004–05 reconciliation shortly after 5 April 2005.

New software is being developed which will make possible a fully automated process. It should be available in late 2005/early 2006.

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a statement on the delays experienced by Mrs. Jennifer East, a constituent, in her dealings with the Tax Credit Office. [206293]

Dawn Primarolo: I understand that the Inland Revenue is making a thorough investigation of Mrs. East's case and will write to the hon. member's constituent shortly.

Dr. Kumar: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effects of tax credits on the number of children living in poverty in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. [206813]

Dawn Primarolo: The introduction of the Child and Working Tax Credits has led to a significant increase in the number of working families benefiting from financial support through tax credits in Middlesborough South and East Cleveland. In November 2002 2,845 families were benefiting from the Working Families' Tax Credit; by January 2004 4,000 working families were benefiting from more than the family element of Child Tax Credit, an increase of 41 per cent. It is not possible to estimate the number of children living in poverty in a particular constituency.

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff have been seconded to the team dealing with overpayment of tax credits; and at what cost. [203144]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 7 December 2004]*: None.

Unemployment

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many people under 25 years of age were unemployed and claiming benefit in Burton on 1 December *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004; [205538]

(2) how many long-term unemployed people aged *(a)* under 25 years and *(b)* over 25 years there were in Burton on 1st December (i) 1997 and (ii) 2004. [205539]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mrs. Janet Dean, dated 20 December 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about unemployment in Burton. I am replying in his absence. (205538 & 205539)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following International Labour Organisation definitions. However, the LFS sample size is too small to give reliable estimates in reply to your particular questions about unemployment in the Burton Constituency.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas including parliamentary constituencies.

The attached table gives the number of people aged under 25 years old resident in the Burton constituency claiming JSA benefits. It also gives the numbers aged under 25 years and those aged over 25 years claiming for over 12 months for November 1997 and November 2004.

JSA claimants resident in the Burton constituency

	All claimants	*People claiming for over 1 year*[1]	
As at November each year	*Aged under 25*	*Aged under 25*	*Aged 25 and over*
1997	520	50	425
2004	260	0	60

[1] Computerised claims only.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the ratio of young jobless people, including those on New Deal programmes, to the total number of unemployed persons was in each of the last 10 years; [205328]

(2) how many young people over 16 years were not in education, employment or training in each of the last 10 years, expressed as a proportion of the total adult labour force. [205329]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 20 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about employment. (205328, 205329)

The tables attached show the available information.

Table 1 shows numbers of unemployed people aged 16 to 24 expressed as percentages of total unemployed aged 16 and over. Table 2 shows numbers of young people aged 16 to 24 who were

not in education, employment or training expressed as proportion of working age population. Both tables cover the three month period ending in October for years from 1995 to 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Table 1: Unemployed people aged 16–24 as percentage of total unemployed aged 16 and over

Three months ending October each year

Seasonally adjusted	*Percentage*
1995	29.8
1996	31.5
1997	32.4
1998	34.1
1999	33.4
2000	35.9
2001	37.3
2002	36.4
2003	39.0
2004	42.2

Source:
Labour Force Survey

Table 2: Young people aged 16 to 24 who are not in education, employment or training as proportion of working age population[1]

Three months ending in October each year

Seasonally adjusted	*Percentage*
1995	1.9
1996	1.9
1997	1.6
1998	1.4
1999	1.6
2000	1.6
2001	1.6
2002	1.7
2003	1.8
2004	1.8

[1] Working age population comprises men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Working Tax Credit

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints the Inland Revenue has received concerning *(a)* incorrect awards and *(b)* overpayment of working tax credit. [205283]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make the formula used in the calculation available to recipients of working tax credit. [205284]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's booklet WTC2 "Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit—A guide", which is available from the Inland Revenue Enquiry Centres and the Inland Revenue website, explains how working tax credit is made up of several elements, what those elements are and how an award is worked out. There are also examples of how tax credits awards are calculated.

Recipients of working (and child) tax credit can call the tax credits helpline to ask for a detailed breakdown of the calculation of their award.

Dr. Iddon: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what reasons underlie the policy that recipients of working tax credit who have been overpaid have to wait until April 2005 for repayment; and if he will make it his policy that repayment be accepted on a *(a)* weekly and *(b)* monthly basis. [205286]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

Overpayments are collected from continuing awards wherever possible, subject to automatic limits on how much they collect.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of claimants in Scotland benefiting from the childcare element of the working tax credit; and what percentage this figure represents of the number of people eligible to claim. [205931]

Dawn Primarolo: The numbers benefiting up to April 2004 are shown in Table 8.3 of "Child and Working Tax Credits. Quarterly Statistics". These publications appear on the Inland Revenue website, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. Figures for December 2004 will be published on 23 December. No estimate is available of the number eligible to benefit.

Mrs. May: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been overpaid working tax credit; and how much has been *(a)* overpaid and *(b)* repaid. [206770]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Broadband Access

Mr. Lindsay Hoyle: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission how many honourable Members have broadband access in their constituency offices; and how many are waiting to be connected to broadband in their constituency offices. [204978]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: I understand that 367 hon. Members have constituency offices with broadband access provided by the Parliamentary Communications Directorate. 3 members have requested but not yet received a broadband connection.

Some Members may be using broadband services in their constituency offices provided through other sources.

Electrical Equipment

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission (1) what percentage of electrical equipment was removed for replacement from offices on the parliamentary estate in each of the last three years; and of this, what percentage is diverted for *(a)* landfill, *(b)* incineration and *(c)* reuse of parts; [204912]

(2) what targets have been set on recycling of electrical equipment removed from offices on the parliamentary estate; and if he will make a statement. [204913]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Around 25 per cent. of electrical equipment is replaced each year. The House of Commons has a number of computer equipment disposal contracts in place. The largest contract is managed by the Parliamentary Communications Directorate and uses a firm that offers obsolete equipment for resale. Equipment that cannot be re-sold is disposed of in an environmentally sensitive way and in compliance with the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Directive. A unified approach to the disposal of computer equipment is currently being considered and a new contract relating to the disposal of Members equipment is currently part of an EU procurement exercise.

The House does not have any targets for the recycling of electrical equipment at present. The main disposal contracts with third parties seek to ensure compliance with the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Directive.

Energy Use

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission (1) what targets have been set on reducing energy use on the parliamentary estate; and if he will make a statement: [204915]

(2) what measures are being taken to encourage energy conservation among Members and staff on the parliamentary estate. [204922]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Energy use on the parliamentary estate is measured in kWh per sq m per year. The target for 2004–05 is 340 kWh per sq m with an allowance for the gas consumed in commissioning the new Palace boilers.

An "Energy Savers Group" including representatives of the departments of the two Houses and Members' staff meets regularly to encourage energy saving and act as champions in their respective areas of the estate. They have arranged for energy saving messages to be distributed with staff salary slips and to be printed in the "In House" magazine and they have distributed energy saving posters. In conjunction with the Carbon Trust, training is programmed for kitchen staff and other major energy users.

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission how many computers there are on the parliamentary estate; and what the estimated average daily energy usage of a computer on the parliamentary estate is. [204921]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: It is not possible to determine the exact number of computers on the parliamentary estate since not all of them are connected to the Parliamentary Network or issued centrally. In addition to this laptop computers may be taken onto and off the estate. As an indication of the numbers involved the Parliamentary Communications Directorate currently provides automatic downloads of anti-virus software to 3,763 personal computers on the Estate. It is not possible to give information on energy usage based on existing records.

Parliamentary Press Lobby

Mr. Gummer: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission (1) what the cost was of the provision of *(a)* desks and *(b)* telephones for the parliamentary press lobby in the last year for which figures are available; [204773]

(2) how much is paid by House of Commons press pass holders, or their employers, for the cost of accommodation on the parliamentary estate; [204774]

(3) how many House of Commons press pass holders have access to desks on the parliamentary estate. [204775]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: In the financial year 2003–04 nothing was spent on providing desks for the parliamentary press lobby. The cost of telephone calls made from the lobby in the year September 2003 to August 2004 was around £9,000. The press do not pay for accommodation on the estate. There are currently 310 category 28A and 28B passes and 189 work spaces. The allocation of desks is a matter for the press.

Parliamentary Works of Art

Mr. Gray: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will list works of art and artefacts *(a)* purchased and *(b)* sold by the Palace of Westminster in each of the last 10 years; and what price was (i) paid and (ii) achieved in each case. [203718]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: A folder containing details of all items purchased from the House of Commons acquisition budget since 1994 has been placed in the Library. The House of Lords has separate acquisition funds.

No items have been sold over the last 10 years.

Visitors Badges

Sandra Gidley: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission for what reasons the decision was taken that the public would no longer be provided with visitors' badges; and who was responsible for the decision. [204282]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Serjeant at Arms and Black Rod jointly decided to curtail the visitor's badge trial as a result of the unacceptable volume of badge losses caused by visitors seeking to retain them. Following consultation with the Advisory Joint Committee on Security, a replacement scheme is to be adopted within the next few weeks based on adhesive paper badges. This scheme is expected to be less expensive and more efficient.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Electronic Pass Readers

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee (1) if he will make a statement on the reliability of electronic door pass readers on the Parliamentary Estate; [205520]

(2) what percentage of results given by electronic pass readers on the Parliamentary Estate over the last 12 months were false negatives; [205521]

(3) if he will propose the replacement of the electronic pass reader system with a chip radio frequency system which requires no physical contact between the electronic reader and the pass; and if he will make a statement. [205522]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: I have been asked to reply. I am aware of problems with reliability of some of the pass readers on the Parliamentary Estate. While it is not the practice of the Commission to comment on details of operational security matters, I can report that plans for an upgraded pass system for both Houses are being developed, one of the elements of which will be a "proximity" rather than swipe card facility. It is considered that this will provide a more reliable and user-friendly system.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Agency Offices

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at how many locations in Northern Ireland the offices of the Social Security Agency and the Training and Employment Agency have been amalgamated into a single office with a joint working arrangement; and what plans he has to amalgamate other offices. [205973]

Mr. Spellar: Of a total network of 35 local social security offices and jobcentres, 22 offices are now operating the joint working arrangements from the new integrated jobs and benefits offices. A further two offices will be co-located by 31 March 2005 and a total of 26 offices will have been completed by 31 March 2006.

It is envisaged that all 35 offices will have been co-located by 31 March 2007.

Blind and Partially Sighted Persons

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many adults are registered blind or partially sighted in each constituency in Northern Ireland. [204759]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available. Figures for the number of adults who are registered blind or partially sighted are not collected centrally. Such information may be collected by individual Health and Social Services Trusts in respect of their own trust, but information is not collected according to Parliamentary constituency.

Information is, however, collected centrally on the number of registered or eligible to be registered blind and partially sighted adults who were in contact with Social Services staff during the financial year 2003–04, and is shown according to Health and Social Services Trust in the following table:

Health and Social Services Trust	*Number of adults in contact with Social Services, 2003–04*	
	Blind	*Partially sighted*
Down Lisburn	275	354
North and West Belfast	180	232
South and East Belfast	323	297
Ulster	184	380
Causeway	39	101
Homefirst	262	357
Armagh and Dungannon	209	334
Craigavon and Banbridge	200	151
Newry and Mourne	206	295
Foyle	139	254
Sperrin Lakeland	127	173
Northern Ireland	2,204	2,928

Note:
Figures are provisional, and refer to persons aged 16 years or over.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding in each Education and Library Board area was used to provide appropriate literature and equipment for blind and partially sighted persons in each of the last three years for which records are available. [204760]

Mr. Gardiner: Education and Library Boards (ELBs) assess and make provision for pupils on an individual basis, in line with the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Provision for children who are blind and partially sighted may be made in a variety of settings, with different funding streams.

In a number of cases the ELBs pay fees for children who attend schools/colleges for the blind in GB. These are composite fees, which include an element for equipment and literature. Provision may also be made in special schools, with the majority of these placements in Northern Ireland being made in Jordanstown School: the budget delegated to this school by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board will provide for items of equipment and literature. Provision may also be made in mainstream schools and units. Boards will make available large print literature, CCTV devices, Braillers and appropriate ICT equipment. Other equipment items may be paid for by the schools themselves through their dedicated SEN budgets.

Due to the diverse nature of the provision for these pupils, the boards cannot quantify funding levels precisely, particularly where the provision is made within a mainstream setting.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children and young persons under the age of 18 years are registered blind or partially sighted in each constituency in Northern Ireland. [204888]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available. Figures for the number of young persons who are registered blind or partially sighted are not collected centrally. Such information may be collected by individual Health and Social Services Trusts in respect of their own trust, but information is not collected according to parliamentary constituency.

Information is, however, collected centrally on the number of registered or eligible to be registered blind and partially sighted young persons who were in contact with Social Services staff during the financial year 2003–04, and is shown according to Health and Social Services Trust in the following table:

Health and Social Services Trust	Number of young persons in contact with Social Services, 2003–04	
	Blind	Partially sighted
Down Lisburn	5	31
North and West Belfast	9	26
South and East Belfast	13	17
Ulster	1	3
Causeway	2	5
Homefirst	5	21
Armagh and Dungannon	3	11
Craigavon and Banbridge	15	7
Newry and Mourne	6	32
Foyle	7	15
Sperrin Lakeland	3	26
Northern Ireland	69	194

Note:
Figures are provisional, and refer to persons aged under 16 years.

Delayed Discharges

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the response of 2 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 236W if he will estimate the costs resulting from delayed discharges in the Province over the last 12 months. [202051]

Angela Smith: It is estimated that the difference between the weekly cost of an elderly hospital bed and the weekly cost of an elderly nursing home bed is approximately £813 per person per week. However, these resources would not be released if all the delayed discharges at any point in time could be moved immediately to nursing home beds, as this would require additional costs in nursing home provision compared to current service levels.

Note:
Delayed discharge information is collected only for hospitals which provide an acute service. Delayed discharges refer to persons delayed in these hospitals while awaiting a community care package.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in each of the last two years. [200878]

Mr. Pearson: There has been no expenditure by the Northern Ireland Office on refurbishment of ministerial private offices in either of the last two years.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Electrical Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205731]

Mr. Pearson: A record is not kept of all the electrical equipment used by the Northern Ireland Office. The information requested therefore could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the eleven departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205611]

Mr. Pearson: The amount spent by the Northern Ireland Office on new furniture in each year since 1997 is detailed in the following table:

	£
1997–98	313,748
1998–99	194,499
1999–2000	172,724
2000–01	115,954
2001–02	189,094
2002–03	266,556
2003–04	330,689

The Department does not as a rule rent any furniture, but the exact expenditure, if any, since 1997 could only be identified at disproportionate cost.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the eleven departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205673]

Mr. Pearson: Records of expenditure on refurbishment are an integral part of records that cover many other items of building maintenance and repair. It would only be possible to identify those items that relate specifically to refurbishment at disproportionate cost. Next year's budget is set on the same basis.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205872]

Mr. Pearson: It has not been possible to extract the cost of lighting from the general electricity costs for the Department.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205714]

Mr. Pearson: In compliance with its statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department has due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity between persons in nine specified categories, which include persons of different race or ethnic group. Both internal and outward focused policies and practices are screened to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on any of the nine categories, including those of different race or ethnic group.

The Northern Ireland Office aims to ensure that its staff are treated fairly and equally by promoting equal opportunities policies whereby no employee or job applicant is unfairly discriminated against either directly or indirectly on a number of grounds, including ethnicity. All staff are provided with a copy of this policy.

The Northern Ireland Office has in place a number of Positive Action initiatives. We have a number of Diversity Networks including one on ethnicity, which have been set up to identify workplace problems their members may experience and pursue solutions with the Diversity Champions, central services or local management. We are also involved in the Cabinet Office initiative and sponsor an Ethnic summer work placement opportunity for ethnic graduates/under graduates.

Additionally, in order to contribute to the Government's commitment to equality throughout Northern Ireland the NIO participates in the Northern Ireland Race Forum, is involved in a range of Promoting Social Inclusion Interdepartmental Working Groups and is considering in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality the extent to which the NIO needs to make further provision to meet any outstanding obligations under the Race Relations Act.

Foreign Legislatures

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions have taken place with the Government of the Irish Republic on participation of hon. Members in the lower house of the Parliament of the Irish Republic. [203702]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I understand the Irish Government has declared it is willing to support the taking forward of certain recommendations made by a committee of the Irish Parliament, including one by which hon. Members of this House representing Northern Ireland constituencies would be invited to a Committee of the Dail concerning Northern Ireland and the Belfast Agreement. This has not been the subject of negotiation with the British Government.

Health Funding

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety has allocated to *(a)* general practitioner pay awards, *(b)* changes to consultant contracts and *(c)* agenda for change for (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [205025]

Angela Smith: The budget settlement for 2005–07 has not yet been agreed, a draft budget settlement is currently being consulted on. The amount of funding available for these pay reform initiatives will not be fully known until the outcome of the consultation has been finalised and the revised budget published.

Housing

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in receipt of housing benefit have been allocated accommodation in the private sector by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in 2004; and what percentage of the total number of people in receipt of housing benefit this figure represents. [202883]

Mr. Spellar: The Housing Executive does not allocate accommodation within the private sector. There are, however, currently 55,892 private sector housing benefit claims in payment. This represents 42.6 per cent. of the total housing benefit caseload.

NHS Digital Hearing Aids

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will permit public private partnerships to be established in the Province to provide access to NHS digital hearing aids. [202589]

Angela Smith: Exploratory discussions on public private partnerships are planned for early next year between RNID, who manage the partnerships scheme in England, and relevant professionals in the health service in Northern Ireland.

Paramilitary Prisoners

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from former paramilitary prisoners regarding perceived discrimination against their children in the employment market; and what steps are being taken to counter such discrimination. [204625]

Mr. Paul Murphy: My officials have had recent discussions with representatives of former paramilitary prisoners about a range of employment, and related, issues. These include perceived discrimination against their children in the employment market. Discussions continue; and careful consideration is being given to the complex issues involved, including in the context of the Review of Security Vetting in Northern Ireland, which I announced on 12 December 2002, *Official Report*, column 32WS, and on which my right hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Jane Kennedy) made a statement on 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 32WS.

Physical Punishment (Children)

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his policy is on the use of physical punishment of children by their parents in Northern Ireland. [205005]

Mr. Pearson: The policy on the use of physical punishment by parents is being co-ordinated by the Office of Law Reform, which is part of the Department of Finance and Personnel. In October of this year I indicated my belief that children in Northern Ireland should not be treated differently to those in England and Wales. Following changes which now appear as section 58 of the Children Act 2004 it is my intention to introduce a similar provision in Northern Ireland.

Cluan Place Investigations

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hours between 1 August 2003 and 31 July 2004 were spent actively investigating the attempted murders of five persons at Cluan Place on the weekend of 3 to 4 June 2002. [204126]

Mr. Pearson: This matter was not actively investigated between 1 August 2003 and 31 July 2004. It was actively investigated at the time but no clear lines of inquiry or forensic evidence emerged from the investigation which could have been actively pursued.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been detained and questioned in connection with the attempted murder of five persons at Cluan Place in East Belfast on the weekend of 3 to 4 June 2002. [204127]

Mr. Pearson: No persons have been arrested and questioned in connection with these incidents.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many officers are investigating the attempted murder of five persons on the weekend of 3 to 4 June 2002 at Cluan Place. [204128]

Mr. Pearson: A Detective Inspector and one Detective Constable were appointed to review the investigation in November 2004. They have been tasked with reviewing the available evidence and determining any lines of inquiry to be followed.

Roads (Expenditure)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total expenditure on roads in Northern Ireland has been in each of the last three years. [204623]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Lady Hermon, dated 15 December 2004:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about expenditure on roads in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Resources and Capital expenditure levels for the three years ended March 2004 are provided in the Table below.

£

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Resource[1]	130,789	149,369	180,252
Capital[2]	66,382	68,934	73,060
Total expenditure on roads	197,171	218,303	253,312

[1] The resource figures include expenditure on operating and maintenance, and administration costs. It excludes: income; depreciation; cost of capital; expenditure on liability claims; notional costs; and exchange gain/(loss).

[2] The capital figures include expenditure on roads and bridges, car park and ferry capital, and information technology. It excludes profit/(loss) on disposal of assets.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204512]

Mr. Pearson: Northern Ireland Office (NIO) staff comprise both members of the NI Civil Service (NICS) and Home Civil Service (HCS). In the past, HCS calculations have been based on calendar years, while NICS on financial years. It is therefore not possible to provide a corporate NIO figure. However, because of improved systems, this will be possible from the 2004–05 financial year onwards.

Table 1: NIO (Home Civil Servants)

	Number of working days lost to absence	*Average working days absence per staff year*
1997	2,007	9.0
1998	1,539	6.9
1999	1,728	8.0
2000	1,870	9.3
2001	2,020	10.0
2002	1,661	8.1
2003	1,333	6.5

Table 2: NIO (Northern Ireland Civil Servants)

	Number of working days lost to absence	*Average working days absence per staff year*
1997–98	n/a	n/a
1998–99	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	n/a	n/a
2000–01	12,148	12.8
2001–02	13,396	13.4
2002–03	14,895	13.7
2003–04	16,593	14.0

Note:
Figures not available prior to 2000–01

WORK AND PENSIONS

Accidents at Work

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in how many accidents at work the influence of *(a)* alcohol, *(b)* illegal drugs and *(c)* legal pharmaceuticals were a contributory causal factor in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [204988]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available.

The Government believe that drug and alcohol misuse in the workplace is unacceptable and should be taken seriously by employers. The Health and Safety Executive's current guidance on substance misuse

recommends that employers should assess the risk from drugs and alcohol at work and take appropriate precautions.

Age Prejudice

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what requirements are placed upon Jobcentres to comply with the voluntary Code of Practice, Age Diversity at Work, A Practical Guide for Business, in helping those who may suffer from age prejudice to find employment; and if he will make a statement. [204173]

Jane Kennedy: Jobcentre Plus has a Diversity and Equality strategy that includes age. It is supported by a national network group and 11 regional Age Diversity groups that keep staff up to date on age issues, through the use of structured training and newsletters.

Jobcentre Plus does not accept vacancies from employers containing age restrictions unless they reflect a legal requirement for the job, or a mandatory retirement age.

Since October 2003 the Jobcentre Plus Employer Diversity Team has been working with employers to promote age diversity in the workforce. They are promoting our Age Positive Campaign's good practice guide with key national employers across Britain.

Age positive messages feature in the marketing of Jobcentre Plus Employer Services to the targeted top 1,000 small and medium-sized enterprises in each Jobcentre Plus district. Jobcentre Plus Employer Services have developed with private recruitment agencies a Service Level Agreement and ethical charter. These commit recruitment agencies to promote diversity with their employer clients if they wish to enter into partnership arrangements and use Jobcentre Plus to advertise their vacancies.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many suspected cases of benefit fraud were *(a)* referred to and *(b)* investigated by his Department in each year since 1997. [200118]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the tables.

Number of referrals received

	DWP[1]	Local authorities[2]	Total
1996–97	1,340,000	n/a	n/a
1997–98	1,360,000	460,000	1,820,000
1998–99	1,330,000	490,000	1,820,000
1999–2000	890,000	430,000	1,320,000
2000–01	870,000	460,000	1,330,000
2001–02	740,000	380,000	1,120,000
2002–03	630,000	290,000	920,000
2003–04	540,000	260,000	800,000

Number of cases accepted for investigation

	DWP[1]	Local authorities[2]	Total
1996–97	940,000	n/a	n/a
1997–98	930,000	400,000	1,330,000
1998–99	920,000	420,000	1,340,000
1999–2000	560,000	350,000	910,000

Number of cases accepted for investigation

	DWP[1]	Local authorities[2]	Total
2000–01	450,000	370,000	820,000
2001–02	400,000	310,000	710,000
2002–03	340,000	200,000	540,000
2003–04	330,000	180,000	510,000

[1] *Source:* Fraud Information By Sector (FIBS), Resource Management and Fraud Business Report.

[2] *Source:* Housing Benefit Management Information System Quarterly Administration Returns April 1996 to March 2004.

Notes:

1. The figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 thousand.
2. DWP figures include both Counter Fraud Investigation Service (CFIS) and National Investigation Service (NIS) referrals.
3. Figures for local authorities are not available prior to 1997–98.
4. Figures for non responding local authorities have been estimated.

n/a—not available

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of *(a)* fraud and *(b)* error in social security benefits excluding jobseeker's allowance, income support and housing benefit since 1997; and if he will place the results in the Library. [200160]

Mr. Pond: The measurement of fraud and error is complex and expensive and therefore it is concentrated on benefits with the highest expenditure and risk of loss, such as income support and jobseeker's allowance. The available information is as follows.

Estimates of fraud and error in social security benefits, excluding jobseeker's allowance, income support and housing benefit since 1997

Results of incapacity benefit review 2001

Category of overpayment	Monetary value (£ million)	Percentage of expenditure
Fraud[1]	Up to 19	Up to 0.3
Customer error	16	0.3
Official error	22	0.4

[1] This is an upper limit, as insufficient cases of fraud were uncovered in the review to enable a robust central estimate to be made.

Note:

Results from a National Benefit Review of fraud and error in incapacity benefit were published in 2001. The following estimates were made and relate to the period April 2000 to March 2001.

Short-term benefits official error overpayments

	Monetary value (£ million)	Benefits covered
April 2001 to March 2002	43	[1]—
April 2002 to March 2003	43	[1]—
April 2003 to March 2004	53	[1]—

[1] Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance.

Notes:

1. Annual estimates of official error only are made for short-term benefit overpayments (incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance).
2. Previous results were carried out using a different methodology and are not comparable.
3. These estimates are subject to wide margins of error.

Long-term benefits official error overpayments

	Monetary value (£ million)
April 2001 to March 2002	43
April 2002 to March 2003	14
April 2003 to March 2004	26

Notes:

1. Annual estimates of official error only are made for long-term benefit overpayments (retirement pension, widow's benefit and bereavement benefit).
2. Previous results were carried out using a different methodology and are not comparable.
3. These estimates are subject to wide margins of error.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many interventions on benefit claims identified as high risk his Department carried out in each year since 1997. [200161]

Mr. Pond: Extra checks known as interventions are carried out on benefit claims which are identified as carrying a higher risk of fraud and error at specified points of the claim. Gateway interventions take place at the outset of the claim, ensuring that benefit entitlement is properly paid. Further checks known as Caseload interventions occur periodically throughout the duration of claims allowing us to take any necessary early corrective action

The information requested is not available for the period April 1997 to April 1999. The available information is in the following tables.

Case interventions

	Total interventions	*Number of changed cases*	*Percentage of cases changed*
1999–2000	1,066,010	89,529	8.4
2000–01	806,825	121,585	15.07
2001–02[1]	1,128,812	177,735	15.74
2002–03[1]	452,290	84,189	18.61
2003–04[1]	493,625	184,082	37.29
Current year to date	247,249	93,129	37.67

[1] These figures do not include active case management interventions or interventions for Northern Ireland.

Gateway interventions

	Total interventions	*Number of changed cases*	*Percentage of cases changed*
1999–2000	1,026,899	56,803	5.53
2000–01	625,132	64,207	10.27
2001–02[1]	438,402	60,191	13.73
2002–03[1]	299,740	46,216	15.42
2003–04[1]	180,243	36,552	20.26
Current year to date	75,970	16,855	22.19

[1] These figures do not include active case management interventions or interventions for Northern Ireland.

Benefit Payments (Newcastle)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women receiving (i) incapacity benefit and (ii) severe disablement allowance there were in each ward of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne. [204617]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested. The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Newcastle upon Tyne by ward and sex

	Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants	
Ward name	*Male*	*Female*
Benwell	425	285
Blakelaw	615	395
Byker	715	420
Castle	270	230
Dene	320	255
Denton	400	285
Elswick	585	320
Fawdon	570	365
Fenham	460	335
Grange	365	270
Heaton	290	225
Jesmond	160	115
Kenton	470	325
Lemington	410	285
Monkchester	675	440
Moorside	550	295
Newburn	390	245
Sandyford	525	240
Scotswood	365	205
South Gosforth	110	70
Walker	660	415
Walkergate	450	315
West City	740	330
Westerhope	330	255
Wingrove	375	260
Woolsington	425	290

Notes:

1. Wards are based on 2003 ward boundaries.
2. All ward level benefit data is the latest currently available, August 2003.
3. For data protection reasons we cannot give the gender breakdown for incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance separately.
4. All benefit counts have been rounded to a multiple of five to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, DWP

Cellulose Fibres

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what studies he has carried out in conjunction with Health and Safety Research into the safety of materials containing cellulose fibres. [206159]

Jane Kennedy: In 1998, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) asked the Institute of Environmental Health to carry out a study into the relative risks of chrysotile asbestos and commonly used substitutes including cellulose. Later in the same year HSE also asked the Committee on the Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC) to advise on the relative carcinogenic risks of three chrysotile asbestos substitutes including cellulose taking into account the report produced by the Institute. The COC advice was that the carcinogenic risk posed by cellulose fibres is likely to be less than that posed by chrysotile. A copy of that advice is available at http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/coc/chrys.pdf.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency cases

concerning constituents in Strathkelvin and Bearsden were being investigated on the latest date for which figures are available. [204202]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. John Lyons dated 20 December 2004:

In reply to your recent parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency cases concerning constituents of Strathkelvin and Bearsden were being investigated on the latest date for which figures are available.

I am not able to supply this information. I can say that at 30 November 2004 around 870 criminal investigations are under way nationally.

Child Support Applications

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent representations he has received on the processing of child support applications; and if he will make a statement. [204160]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Miss Anne McIntosh, dated 20 December 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent representations he has received on the processing of child support applications; and if he will make a statement.

In my evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on 17 November 2004 I outlined the current position in relation to the processing of Child Support applications. I accepted that the current position was not satisfactory. I outlined the steps we were taking in conjunction with EDS, our provider for computer and telephony services, to remedy the position.

Council Tax Benefit

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average reduction in council tax bills for *(a)* an average household and *(b)* an average pensioner household in England due to council tax benefit was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [202288]

Mr. Pond: The available information is in the table.

Average annual council tax benefit in England.

	£
All cases	653.00
Recipients aged 60 and over	649.00

Notes:

1. Figures are estimates based on administrative data from local authorities.
2. The estimates are consistent with PBR 2004 forecasts

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201694]

Maria Eagle: The Department has conducted campaign advertising in the following newspapers which have a substantial Muslim readership.

The Nation
Daily Aushaf
Janomot
Potrika
Surma
Asian Times
Al Arab
Al Ahram
Bangla Express
Notun Din
Bangla Post
Eastern Eye
Asian Leader
Asian People
Euro Bangla
Bangla Mirror
Muslim Weekly
The Daily Jang

The Department has also advertised in several ethnic language publications, which have a smaller Muslim readership, these are:

Garavi Gujarat
Gujarat Samachar
Punjab Times
Sikh Times
Des Pardes
Awaze Quam International
Asian Xpress

Additional Muslim publications, which are not newspapers in which advertisements have been placed are:

Bid UK 2004 (a guide to Eid in UK, accompanying Eid ul-Fitr festival at end of Ramadan)

Muslim Directory 04/05 (guide to services and businesses for Muslim Community)

With respect to recruitment advertising no specific Muslim titles are used. The selection of titles is based on an understanding of the labour market, recruitment issues, the readership of titles and their reach within a guaranteed circulation. The reach of the title i.e. the number of people receiving it will be checked to ensure it includes all members of the community, including Muslims.

The type of advertising placed is campaign related. It will be designed to support specific marketing campaigns and will be display advertisements.

Departmental Establishments

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* full-time, *(b)* part-time and *(c)* temporary jobs his Department and its Executive agencies have had in (i) the Scottish Borders and (ii) Scotland since 1997. [199594]

Maria Eagle: Information on the numbers of staff employed in the Department and its agencies in Scotland at specified points in time is in the following table. It is not possible to identify staff in the Scottish Borders separately. Information is not available prior to April 2002.

Number of staff in Scotland

	(a) Full-time	*(b) Part-time*	*(c) Temporary*
As at 30 April 2002			
Jobcentre Plus	8,733	1,616	381
The Pension Service	535	111	9
Child Support Agency	1,329	178	10
Appeals Service	111	10	0
Rest of the Department	749	107	18
Total	11,457	2,022	418
As at 31 March 2003			
Jobcentre Plus	7,779	1,644	150
The Pension Service	1,617	224	88
Child Support Agency	1,436	234	10
Appeals Service	108	6	4
Rest of the Department	717	110	35
Total	11,657	2,218	287
As at 31 March 2004			
Jobcentre Plus	7,458	1,730	376
The Pension Service	1,802	266	60
Child Support Agency	1,294	273	24
Appeals Service	101	8	4
Rest of the Department	670	114	40
Total	11,325	2,391	504

Note:
Figures are full-time equivalents and are consistent with Cabinet Office definitions.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [202434]

Maria Eagle: The only buildings owned by DWP during past two years were those relating to the former Employment Service and those owned by the Health & Safety Executive.

The majority of the DWP estate has been transferred via the PRIME contract to Land Securities Trillium. The former DSS buildings were transferred in April 1998 and the PRIME contract was expanded in December 2003 to include former Employment Service buildings. Vacant space is surrendered to Land Securities Trillium and the Department only pays for the space it occupies.

34 surplus properties with a base value of £5.4 million were transferred to Land Securities Trillium in December 2003 in accordance with the expanded PRIME contract. Land Securities Trillium assumed responsibility for all associated costs thereafter. The Health & Safety Executive has not had any empty properties.

Further information relating to empty properties in 2002–03 is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202448]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not available centrally in the format requested and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in his Department in each of the last two years. [202431]

Maria Eagle: Over the past two years the estimated total amount spent on new builds or demolition rebuilds is £21.7 million. These costs have been incurred as part of the Department's modernisation programme and are being managed under the terms of the PRIME PFI contract.

Because of the way we monitor the cost of acquisitions the spend by year is not readily available for these new builds.

In addition, the Health and Safety Executive has incurred a cost of £1.3 million for land purchase in connection with a PFI scheme in Bootle. They also entered into a 30-year PFI deal in April 2002 which involves the construction of a new laboratory at a capital cost of £56.5 million.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed, as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203325]

Mr. Pond: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Department for Work and Pensions under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years; [203326]

(2) how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203327]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

Number of registered files destroyed by the Department for Work and Pensions

	Files destroyed
1999–2000	15,524
2000–01	21,519
2001–02	23,379
2002–03	28,549
2003–04	36,885

Notes:
1. These figures only refer to registered files i.e. records containing policy and other corporately created documents. Destruction figures for customer/benefit files, personnel files and other administrative records created by the DWP are not held centrally.
2. During this period, the file holding and number of files considered for destruction increased because the number of files created during the preceding five to 10 years also rose.
3. The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security and part of the Department for Education and Employment including the Employment Service. Since that date, the number of files held by the Department expanded and the numbers of files created and eligible to be considered for destruction similarly increased.
4. The figures for years 1999–2000 and 2000–01 only refer to files destroyed by the then Department of Social Security.

Disability Benefits

Dr. Anthony D. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many applications for *(a)* attendance allowance and *(b)* disability living allowance, under the special rules requiring the submission of a DS1500 form, have been received in each of the last three years; and how many of these have been rejected. [200277]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the table. Information is not collected on the number of claims rejected under the special rules provisions.

AA/DLA Special Rules: claims received and claims cleared for the financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04

	AA special rules claims received	*DLA special rules claims received*
2001/02	42,265	22,995
2002/03	42,395	23,216
2003/04	40,469	21,880

Note:
Claims involved the submission of a DS1500 form or a request that the claim should be considered under the special rules.
Source:
DWP MIS computer system, 100 per cent. count

Disability Discrimination Bill

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the effect of the proposed Disability Discrimination Bill on political parties; and if he will place in the Library the assessment of the regulatory impact on political parties. [204758]

Maria Eagle: Political parties are already covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in their capacity as employers or providers of goods, facilities or services to the public or a section of the public. However, they are not currently covered in relation to the provision of goods, facilities or services to their members where members do not constitute the public or a section of the public (in other words, where membership is determined by a genuine process of selection on the basis of personal criteria). The Disability Discrimination Bill remedies this by extending coverage of the 1995 Act to associations of 25 or more members which apply such membership selection procedures. A copy of the Regulatory Impact Assessment which accompanies the Bill is available in the Library.

On 16 December the Government published a consultation document, Cm 6042 "Disability Discrimination Bill Consultation on private clubs, premises, the definition of disability and the questions procedure", which among other matters seeks views on how, if at all, the duty to make reasonable adjustments should be modified in relation to political associations which may be covered by the provisions of the Bill. Views are sought by 18 March 2005. A copy of the consultation document is available in the Library.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how long on average people waited for *(a)* an appeal and *(b)* an appeal result for disability living allowance in the last period for which figures are available. [204430]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Norman Egan to Mr. David Drew dated 20 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked Christina Townsend to respond to your question regarding on average the length of time people waited for *(a)* an appeal and *(b)* an appeal result for disability living allowance in the last period for which figures are available. Christina is away from the office at the moment and I have been asked to reply.

The information in table 1 details the number of disability living allowance claimants as at 31 May 2004. Column 1 in table 2 shows the average length of time taken for an appeal from lodgement with Disability and Carers Service to cleared at hearing by the Appeals Service. Column 2 shows the average length of time taken for an appeal from receipt at the Appeals Service to the date of the first hearing.

Table 1: All Disability Living Allowance claimants as at 31 May 2004

	Claimants in Thousands
All Disability Living Allowance	2,606.7

Notes:
1. Cases where payment of benefit has been suspended are excluded.
2. Figures taken from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 May 2004.
3. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

Table 2: Disability Living Allowance Appeals, average times (weeks) for an appeal between lodged to clearance and received to date of first hearing for July 2003 to June 2004.

	Lodged with Disability and Carers Service to Cleared at	*Received at the Appeals Service to Cleared at Hearing*
Agency	20.33	11.28

Notes:
1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
2. Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
3. Figures are rounded to two decimal places

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

The figure quoted in table 2 column 2 of 11.28 weeks is for the period July 2003 to June 2004. During the period July 2004 to October 2004 this waiting period has been reduced to 1068 weeks.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Document Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how much his Department has spent on acquiring shredding equipment for office use in each year since 1997 to date; [202148]

(2) how many staff hours have been spent shredding documents in each month since January. [202149]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: Disposal of departmental records is undertaken as part of normal business, either internally or by approved contractors. Information on the amounts spent on shredding equipment by the Department is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what factors underlie the increase in the rate of files shredded since January 2003; and if he will make a statement. [202150]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: The Department for Work and Pensions continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act. This process is carried out under the guidance and supervision of The National Archives.

As file review in respect of registered records is undertaken on a retrospective basis, generally five to 10 years after the closure of files, the increase in the number of policy records destroyed during 2003–04 (almost 37 thousand files compared to 28.5 thousand in 2002–03) reflects the increase in number of official records created during the period in which the files were created. In DWP, as in any other large Government Department, as business changes and the organisation expands and contracts the number of policy records created will also rise and fall.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the criteria used to decide which documents and files should be shredded; and what mechanism exists to ensure that documents and files are not destroyed for other reasons. [202151]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: The Department for Work and Pensions keeps records for as long as they are needed for administrative and business purposes. Records of enduring historical value are selected for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of the National Archives on the basis of guidelines which are published on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagernent/advice/

Employment

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the back to work help for the over 50s in Scotland. [202995]

Jane Kennedy: Since 1997 our policies have helped increase the employment rate for people aged 50 to state pension age in Scotland from over 59 per cent. to over 68 per cent., with 118,000 more people aged 50 and above in work. This increase has been faster than the increase in the overall employment rate.

People aged 50 and over who are looking for work have access to a wide range of back to work help available through Jobcentre Plus. For example Training for Work is available from day one of unemployment in recognition of the lack of skills of many in this customer group. Jobcentre Plus programmes and services have recently been extended on a voluntary basis to people in receipt of pension credit.

Over 15,000 people in Scotland have been helped into work through New Deal 50 plus, the main programme of help for this group.

Evaluation has shown that four out of five people were still in work two years after starting work using New Deal 50 plus. Further (early) evaluation evidence on Employment Credits indicated that over 40 per cent. of recipients would not have taken their job without the additional financial help of the Credit.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he is taking to extend awareness of employment opportunities in the UK to EU nationals who are *(a)* resident in the UK and *(b)* resident elsewhere. [204486]

Jane Kennedy: Employment Services throughout the European Economic Area (EEA) are connected through a network known as European Employment Services (EURES) that exists to promote sharing of vacancies and information on working and living conditions in the respective member states.

Jobcentre Plus is an active member of EURES making available some 400,000 vacancies through its own website and that of EURES. Vacancies available to EU nationals in the UK are displayed on the Jobcentre Plus website, www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk, where jobs from other member states are integrated on the Jobcentre Plus internet job bank.

Vacancies for EU nationals resident elsewhere, are advertised on the EURES website, www.eruesjobs.com. The EURES website currently has a database of some 73,000 jobs available to all EEA citizens. That number will progressively increase as more of the new member states that joined the EU on 1 May link up to

the EURES database. From next year the information technology supporting EURES will change to allow all member states' vacancies to be visible to all EEA jobseekers through a common platform.

For those jobseekers in the UK who do not have access to the internet, Jobcentre Plus offices provide access through Jobpoints, self service kiosks that display all the vacancies shown on the internet job bank. Similar facilities are available in employment offices in many of the other member states.

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202397]

Maria Eagle: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Minister's public engagements.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate of average payout underpinned the £400 million total for the financial assistance scheme. [205930]

Malcolm Wicks: None. The Government believe, taking account of available information on numbers involved, that £400 million should provide substantial help for those most seriously affected by failure of their pension schemes. But the size of average payments will depend on a number of factors, including the assistance levels for those facing the most urgent difficulties on which I refer the hon. Member to the Written Statement I gave on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 64–66WS and the precise numbers and circumstances of eligible individuals.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [202443]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions are committed to reviewing their pay policies to ensure that they are compliant with the current equal pay legislation and do not either directly or indirectly discriminate against any group of employees. Equal Pay Audits are carried out regularly to review existing policies and to inform the development of the departmental reward strategy. The most recent audit, which commenced earlier in 2004, is nearing final approval. On completion, a summary of the final report will be placed in the House of Commons Library. This report will then by used to develop an up to date equal pay action plan.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) suggests that, as a general guide, any gender differences of 5 per cent. or more, or patterns of differences of 3 per cent. or more will require exploration and explanation. Early indications are that that there has been progress in closing the gap between male and female average salaries within DWP; in May 2002 (when the last equal pay audit was finalised) the overall gap was 5.7 per cent. whereas in December 2003 it had reduced to 4.8 per cent. This figure is calculated using the salaries of all staff within DWP excluding the Senior Civil Service whose remuneration is handled by Cabinet Office. The differences between male and female mean salaries change by grade. In our administrative grades, which are staffed by a greater proportion of female staff, the mean salary is higher for women than men in these grades. In our executive grades, male mean salaries are higher.

There are a number of possible reasons for the gender mix at the administrative and executive grades, for example, historical progression rates for each gender. We have recently begun to address these by consciously shortening pay scales and the Department is currently considering the recommendations in the latest draft report to identify any further action required.

Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204363]

Maria Eagle: There are currently 17 workplace gyms around the country that are available to staff working for the Department for Work and Pensions. DWP does not contribute to the running costs of these facilities.

Housing Benefit

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many applications for housing benefit extended payments were made in each year since 1997–98; and how many of those applications were successful. [204467]

Mr. Pond: The available information is in the table.

Housing benefit extended payments, Great Britain 1997 to 2004

	All housing benefit extended payments applications	*Successful housing benefit extended payments applications*
1997–98	170,000	140,000
1998–99	150,000	130,000
1999–2000	160,000	130,000
2000–01	160,000	140,000
2001–02	130,000	120,000
2002–03	n/a	n/a
2003–04	n/a	n/a

n/a = Not available. This is due to data quality issues around information supplied by local authorities.

Notes:
1. The figures have been rounded to two significant figures.
2. Figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
3. Claims received in one quarter could be determined in the following quarter; therefore the number of applications and the number of successful applications within one quarter do not necessarily refer to the same claims.
4. The figures are the sum of data collected in all four quarters from April to March each year.
Source:
Housing Benefit Management Information System Quarterly Administration Returns April 1997 to March 2004.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202446]

Jane Kennedy: In line with policy and practice in other Government Departments, the Department for Work and Pensions does not record separately those cases which are brought against the Department involving the Human Rights Act 1998. Human Rights are integrated into the general law and are rarely the sole basis of challenge. This makes them very difficult to count separately.

The information required could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants failed to attend their Personal Capability Assessment in each of the last 12 months; and for how many of those who attended incapacity benefit was *(a)* increased, *(b)* decreased and *(c)* unaltered after their assessment. [203360]

Maria Eagle: The Personal Capability Assessment is used to determine whether or not a claimant is sufficiently incapacitated to be entitled to incapacity benefit. A positive outcome does not directly affect the rate of incapacity benefit in payment; the rate depends on a number of other factors such as the length of the spell of incapacity, number of dependants, and other benefits in payment.

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Midlothian received incapacity benefit in the period (i) 1990 to 1997 and (ii) 1997 to 2004. [204602]

Maria Eagle: Constituency level data iarenot available prior to 1997. The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Scotland and the parliamentary constituency of Midlothian

Period ending	Scotland	Midlothian parliamentary constituency
31 March 1990	240,500	—
30 March 1991	265,600	—
04 April 1992	297,100	—
03 April 1993	321,200	—
02 April 1994	338,600	—

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Scotland and the parliamentary constituency of Midlothian

Period ending	Scotland	Midlothian parliamentary constituency
12 April 1995	359,300	—
31 May 1996	349,300	—
31 May 1997	350,100	3,200
31 May 1998	334,000	3,300
31 May 1999	326,500	3,100
31 May 2000	325,000	3,200
31 May 2001	329,400	3,200
31 May 2002	327,700	3,400
31 May 2003	324,400	3,300
31 May 2004	322,700	3,200

Notes:
1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred
2. Incapacity benefit replaced sickness/invalidity benefit in April 1995.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 1 per cent. samples up to 12 April 1995 and 5 per cent. samples thereafter.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of incapacity benefit there were in each ward in Wrexham in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [204969]

Maria Eagle: Incapacity Benefit ward-level data is not available prior to 1998. The 2004 data will not be available until early next year.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have had their incapacity benefit stopped during the last 13 months. [206185]

Maria Eagle: The only available data relate to claimants whose incapacity benefits are stopped in relation to a medical examination; this includes claimants who fail to complete the process as well as those who are found fit. The available information is in the table.

The number of incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claims disallowed in relation to medical examination

Month ending	Number
2003	
30 November	17,205
31 December	14,810
2004	
31 January	20,630
29 February	16,575
31 March	21,395
30 April	15,225
31 May	17,650
30 June	17,850
31 July	16,565
31 August	16,700
30 September	17,920
31 October	17,865
30 November	19,610
Total for period November 2003 to November 2004	230,005

Notes:
1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Medical examinations figures include both the "Own Occupation Test" and the "Personal Capability Assessment".
3. Claimants who either fail to attend a medical examination or return the medical questionnaire, and therefore lose their entitlement to incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance, may have their claim re-instated at a later date. The number of re-instated cases is not available.

4. Figures include credits only cases.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. counts.

Income Support

Chris Bryant: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the constituency of the Rhondda claim income support. [204607]

Mr. Pond: In August 2004 there were 4,900 income support recipients in the Rhondda parliamentary constituency.

Notes:
1. Figure is rounded to the nearest hundred and quoted in thousands.
2. Number is based on a 5 per cent. sample and therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and what percentage of those invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of those invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to the Department. [201006]

Jane Kennedy: It is DWP policy to pay an invoice within 30 days of receipt of it unless alternative payment terms are specified in the contract.

The average length of time between the date of invoices received by the Department from a supplier to payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months is 18 days.

For the period from November 2003 to October 2004, 96 per cent. of all invoices were paid within 30 days of receipt.

Less than 1 per cent. of invoices remained unpaid after 90 days of receipt.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are employed by Jobcentre Plus; what the running cost of the body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of the body. [203822]

Jane Kennedy: The average number of full-time equivalent persons employed by Jobcentre Plus in 2003–04 was 79,644. This figure includes senior management, staff on secondment or loan to the Agency, staff employed on fixed term and temporary contracts, but excludes staff on secondment to other organisations.

The latest information available on staff numbers up to the end of October 2004 indicates that the number of full-time equivalent persons employed by the Agency has fallen to 76,664, a reduction in staff numbers of approximately 3,000 since April 2004.

The net administration cost for Jobcentre Plus for the year ended 31 March 2004 was £3,041,511,000 as published in the Jobcentre Plus Annual Report and Accounts 2003–04 (HC909).

We plan to complete the rollout of Jobcentre Plus1 new integrated services across the country in 2006. This service brings together help for customers of working age looking for work or wishing to claim benefits, while out of work. As we continue to roll out this new service, future plans for Jobcentre Plus include: seeking to continue to improve the service it provides through more personalised support for the most disadvantaged people in our communities, increasing access to its services through the use of new technology (for its individual customers and employers) and improving the efficiency of the organisation.

Mr. Roy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many organisations took part in the consultation exercise on the proposed Jobcentre Plus roll-out programme in Lanarkshire this year; and how many supported the proposal; [200502]

(2) if he will publish the submissions received in the Lanarkshire Jobcentre Plus roll-out consultation; [200503]

(3) how many clients and client groups of the proposed Lanarkshire Jobcentre Plus roll-out programme were asked to submit their views on the roll-out proposals. [200504]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Frank Roy, dated 20 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the proposed Jobcentre Plus rollout programme in Lanarkshire. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It may be helpful if I explain that we will be able to provide you with a summary of the comments received from stakeholders once final decisions on our rollout plans have been announced. Comments we have received in confidence will not be include. I have asked the District Manager for Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire, to provide you with this information in due course. We will be unable to put the actual submissions into the public domain because we have not sought prior permission from those responding.

Turning to the question of consultation, the following list provides details of the clients, and client groups that were asked to submit their views. This is an addition to all local MPs, MSPs and Councillors who were consulted about our plans. Four organisations have made representations and, of these, two have already expressed a willingness to support the flexible delivery proposals in their area.

Land Securities Trillium

Strathclyde Police—Motherwell and Hamilton

Principals of Colleges in Motherwell, Hamilton, Cumbernauld, East Kilbride, Coatbridge

Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire

Debt Management

Counter Fraud Investigation Service in Hamilton, Motherwell

Pension Service

Scottish Executive

Glasgow Chamber of Commerce

Citizens Advice Bureaux in East Kilbride, Airdrie, Bellshill, Coatbridge, Hamilton, Motherwell, Cambuslang, Rutherglen

Inland Revenue in Coatbridge, East Kilbride, Hamilton, Motherwell
Lanarkshire Acute NHS Trust
Lanarkshire Primary Care NHS Trust
Careers Scotland
APEX Scotland
SLC Social Work
State Hospital, Carstairs
HM Prisons, Barlinnie
Small Business Gateway
East Dunbartonshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
Federation of Small Businesses
Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board
Lanarkshire Chambers Group
Procurator Fiscal

I hope this is helpful.

Learning Allowance

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions where he plans to pilot the learning allowance; and if he will make a statement. [205399]

Jane Kennedy: In the pre Budget report we announced our intention to pilot the Learning Allowance from April 2006. The pilot areas will be chosen in due course, taking account of a number of factors, in particular the need to evaluate as rigorously as possible the impact of this new policy in the pilot areas. We will make a further statement when they have been chosen.

New Deal

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals have benefited from the *(a)* New Deal for Young People, *(b)* New Deal 25 plus, *(c)* New Deal 50 plus, *(d)* New Deal for Disabled People, *(e)* New Deal for lone parents, *(f)* New Deal for partners, *(g)* New Deal: self-employment and *(h)* New Deal for musicians in (i) Orkney, (ii) Shetland and (iii) the Highlands and Islands. [203564]

Jane Kennedy: Information is not available at Local Authority level for New Deal for Disabled People, New Deal for Partners and New Deal for Musicians. Information on people starting and achieving jobs through the self-employment option of New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus cannot be provided as the small numbers involved could result in the identification of individuals.

The available information is in the table.

New Deal— individual starts

Location	*Orkney Islands*	*Shetland Islands*	*Highlands*
New Deal for Young People	200	130	2,820
New Deal 25 plus	220	120	2,840
New Deal 50 plus	50	40	640
New Deal for Lone Parents	120	60	2,180
New Deal— individuals into jobs			
New Deal for Young People	140	90	1,940
New Deal 25 plus	50	40	1,400
New Deal 50 plus	50	40	640
New Deal for Lone Parents	50	40	1,260

Notes:
1. New Deal information is available for the Highlands Local Authority but not 'Highlands and Islands'.
2. All information provided is for Local Authority areas.
3. Data is to June 2004, except New Deal 50 plus which is to March 2003 and relates to New Deal 50 plus Employment Credit starts.
4. Information is not available for New Deal 50 plus at Local Authority level after March 2003.
5. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in *(a)* Leeds and *(b)* Leeds, West have found work through the New Deal for Disabled People in each year since its commencement; [204275]

(2) which groups are contracted to provide the New Deal for disabled people in Leeds; what the performance of each in enabling people to find work since the start of the programme has been; what targets they have to meet; and if he will make a statement. [204278]

Jane Kennedy: New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) contractors are achieving considerable success in helping people on incapacity benefit into work and, collectively, they have helped 190 people into work in the Leeds Jobcentre Plus District since the national roll-out of the programme in July 2001.

The NDDPJob Brokers operating in the Leeds Jobcentre Plus District are: Remploy; Shaw Trust; Action for Employment; Mencap Pathway; and Yes 2 Work. Although they have overall contract requirements that they are expected to meet, these are not broken down by District.

As information is not available broken down by Leeds and Leeds West, information on people helped into work through the New Deal for Disabled People programme in the Jobcentre Plus Leeds District, including people helped through Jobcentre Plus, is in the table.

New Deal for Disabled People in Leeds Jobcentre Plus District

July 2001—September 2001	0
October 2001—September 2002	40
October 2002—September 2003	70
October 2003—September 2004	120
Total	240

Notes:
1. Data are from July 2001 from national rollout of the programme.
2. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and total may not sum due to rounding.
3. Information in the table is for individuals helped into work.
4. Individual Job Broker performance figures are not published as these are commercial in confidence.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those leaving the new deal for long-term unemployed aged *(a)* 25 to 29, *(b)* 30

to 49 and *(c)* 50+ years found (i) employment and (ii) sustained jobs in each year since 2001; and what proportion of those leaving the new deal for the long-term unemployed in each year since 2001 did so for (1) sustained jobs and (2) jobs lasting fewer than 13 weeks, broken down by region. [202285]

Jane Kennedy: People entering employment through New Deal 25 plus are only classified as leaving the programme to a job when they have entered sustained employment. For the purposes of New Deal 25 plus, a job is regarded as sustained if no new claim is made for Job Seeker's Allowance within 13 weeks of leaving New Deal.

Information on leavers from the programme to sustained employment is in the tables.

New Deal 25 plus—proportion of leavers by age group to unsubsidised sustained employment since 2001

Percentage

Year	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Total	19	24	24	27
of which: aged 25–29	25	32	31	33
aged 30–49	21	27	27	29
aged 50+	13	14	14	17

New Deal 25 plus—proportion of leavers by region and country to unsubsidised sustained employment since 2001

Percentage

Year	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Total	19	24	24	27
of which from:				
Scotland	18	23	23	29
North East	16	26	23	28
North West	18	25	25	26
Yorkshire and Humber	18	24	23	27
Wales	18	24	26	30
West Midlands	19	24	23	27
East Midlands	19	24	24	30
East of England	22	27	26	26
South East	23	26	26	27
London	18	22	22	22
South West	23	29	31	35

Notes:

1. Data are to June 2004.
2. Figures for each year refer to the period January to December, except 2004, which refers to January to June.
3. Information refers to the percentage of leavers to unsubsidised sustained employment as a proportion of all leavers in the stated categories.
4. The proportions in the table do not take account of all jobs gained through New Deal 25 plus because people can gain a job through New Deal 25 plus but not leave the programme to a job.
5. Percentages are calculated from unrounded figures.

Source:

DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

North Sea Fishing

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what regulations determine minimum fishing distance between fishing vessels and North Sea rigs. [204217]

Jane Kennedy: Sections 21–24 of the Petroleum Act 1987 prohibit vessels from entering safety zones around offshore oil and gas installations, which extend to 500 metres of any part of the installation. This prohibition includes fishing vessels while fishing.

Pension Credit (Scotland)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate has been made of the total number of people eligible to claim pension credit in Scotland. [205934]

Malcolm Wicks: Estimates of pension credit eligibility, based on 2002–03 Family Resources Survey data projected forward to 2004–05, are currently being revised consistent with pre-Budget report assumptions. The revised estimates will be available in January 2005.

Pension/Benefit Payments

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what arrangements his Department has put in place to ensure cash payments to pensioners are made in the event of information technology failure. [205461]

Mr. Pond: The Department has comprehensive contingency arrangements in place to deal with such an event. These arrangements would ensure that any affected payments are regenerated and pensioners would be paid in their normal way—either directly into a named account or by cheque. Where this is not possible, for example the first payment of an entitlement, payment will be by cheque. Our systems have been designed to minimise the need for cash payments to be made to pensioners.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will ensure that pension payments due on Christmas Eve are paid earlier. [203680]

Mr. Pond: Christmas Eve is a Friday. Banks and Post Offices will be open, so pensioners will be able to access their pension in the normal way. Only a very small number of pensioners receive their pension on a Friday.

Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in respect of how many pensions contracted-out rebates have been paid in each year since 1997; and what the average payment was. [203175]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the following table:

Million

	Average weekly numbers contracted out of SERPS/S2P	*Average annual payment to people contracted out of SERPS/S2P (£)*
1997–98	10.9	680
1998–99	11.1	700
1999–2000	10.9	750
2000–01	11.1	790
2001–02	11.1	810
2002–03	11.1	950
2003–04	10.8	950
2004–05	10.7	990

Notes:

1. The estimates of the numbers contracted out and the average annual payment are for Great Britain only and are consistent with the rebate estimates for the 2004 Pre-Budget Report.
2. The numbers contracted out are based on those shown in the Departmental publication "Second-Tier Pension Provision" and other information on contracting-out trends that has emerged in recent months.

3. The large increase in the average annual payment from 2002–03 is due to the increase in the level of the rebate which applied from the beginning of that tax-year.

Source:
Government Actuary's Department (GAD)

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204506]

Maria Eagle: All the information requested is not available. Information for the operational years 1997–98 and 1998–99 is not available. The remaining information requested is shown as follows:

Sickness absence information for DWP and the former DSS

Department	*Working days lost*	*Average number of working days lost*	*Sickness rate*
DSS			
1999–2000	1,057,549.2	12.0	4.8
2000–01	1,085,307.5	12.3	4.9
2001–02	1,039,208.8	11.3	4.5
DWP			
2002–03	1,674,435.3	12.3	4.9
2003–04	1,691,150.3	12.6	5.0

1. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was created in June 2001. Due to the migration of businesses into and out of the newly forming Department, and differences in calculation methods, figures for the Department as a whole are only available from April 2002.

2. The information in the table covers the years April 1999 to March 2002 relating to the former Department of Social Security (DSS), the main predecessor Department in place prior to the formation of DWP, and for DWP for April 2002 to March 2004.

3. Figures have been provided for DSS and DWP for each full operational year since 1999. Sickness absence information for the current year, April 2004 to March 2005, will be available in spring 2005.

4. As at 30 September 2004, the Department had lost 790,668.1 days to sickness absence which equated to a sickness rate of 4.8 per cent. or 12.1 average number of working days lost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204320]

Maria Eagle: Departmental special advisers have not made any appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997.

Timber

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the refurbishment projects in his Department that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment also comes from legal and sustainable sources. [202191]

Maria Eagle: This Department occupies approximately 1,800 buildings. The information requested about the number of refurbishment projects in progress and due to start in the next six months is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, the majority of refurbishment projects are undertaken for the Department by our Estates Partners, Land Securities Trillium. They have been instructed that all timber used across the Department must be verified as being from legal and sustainable sources. They include this within all specifications for refurbishment work. On an annual basis a supply chain report is presented to the Department, detailing the evidence presented for all timber used. This report, and the evidence that it contains, is then independently audited to ensure that the timber does meet the required standards. Any areas of weakness are identified and the Department works closely with Land Securities Trillium to ensure that performance is improved.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are in receipt of winter fuel payment in Coventry. [205306]

Malcolm Wicks: For winter 2003–04 there were 55,970 pensioners in Coventry who received the winter fuel payment. We would expect the number to be similar for winter 2004–05.

Notes:
1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. samples.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people in Scotland eligible to claim *(a)* the winter fuel payment of £200 and *(b)* the additional payment of £100; and how many claim forms have been received this winter. [205932]

Malcolm Wicks: We estimate around 60,000 people in Scotland will turn 60 and become newly entitled to receive a winter fuel payment for 2004–05. In 2003–04 around 35,000 people in Scotland aged 60 received an automatic payment. We would expect the number to be similar in 2004–05. Those people who are not in receipt of certain benefits and therefore do not receive an automatic payment, will need to claim. So far this winter we have received 38,872 claim forms from people in Scotland. Some of these may be from people who would have been paid a winter fuel payment automatically.

Almost all people in Scotland who are eligible for the additional £100 payment for those aged 70 or over will be paid automatically. So far this winter three claims for the additional £100 payment have been received and, of these, two are entitled to an automatic payment.

Women Pensioners

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1382, on women pensioners, how many *(a)* older elderly people

and *(b)* women were in receipt of pension credit in Scotland on the latest date for which figures are available. [205933]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 October there were 89,100 households in Scotland in receipt of pension credit in which the claimant was aged 80 or over. These households comprise 97,215 individuals, some of whom will be aged under 80. There will also be a number of households in which a claimant aged under 80 has a partner aged 80 or over. It is not possible to give a figure for these. At the same date, 218,370 women in Scotland were in receipt of pension credit, either as individuals or as part of a couple.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.
3. The 97,215 individual recipients will include a number of partners under age 80 and may include a small number of partners under age 60.
4. The 218,370 women in receipt of pension credit may include a small number of partners under age 60.

Work-based Learning

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the role of his Department in working with other agencies to stimulate work-based learning. [204494]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions1 role in working with other agencies to stimulate work-based learning is to ensure that Jobcentre Plus advisers understand the needs of local employers. They can then ensure that jobless customers can undertake the training required to fill the vacancies that arise and that, wherever possible, these customers have the opportunity to continue training once in work, supported by the Learning and Skills Council where appropriate.

Our policy is to deliver a knowledgeable and co-ordinated service for individuals and employers. The policy intention is reflected by:

- the Department's partnership working within the Skills Alliance (key Government Departments, the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress and the Small Business Council);
- the increased working links with the Department for Education and Skills;
- joint planning and delivery of work based learning by Jobcentre Plus and Learning and Skills Councils;
- and links with the Department for Trade and Industry and the business networks that they sponsor, at regional and local levels.

One outcome of this partnership approach is the ongoing work by Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council to implement the recommendations of the National Employment Panel's workforce development report.

Working Neighbourhoods Pilot

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress with the working neighbourhoods pilot scheme. [204652]

Jane Kennedy: The Working Neighbourhoods Pilot started on 1 April 2004 for a period of two years. It operates in 12 neighbourhoods, all with relatively high levels of worklessness. An interim evaluation report is due in summer 2005 and this will provide robust evidence on performance across the 12 Working Neighbourhoods Pilot sites.

Young Disabled People

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many disabled people up to the age of 21 years are receiving state benefits due to their disability. [206186]

Maria Eagle: The requested information is in the table:

Number of young disabled people under the age of 22 receiving benefits

Benefit[1]	*Number*
Disability living allowance (DLA) aged under16[2]	276,500
Disability living allowance (DLA) aged 16 to 21[2]	87,900
Income support (IS) with disability premium[3]	26,300
Severe disablement allowance (SDA)[3]	[6]—
Industrial injuries disablement benefits (IIDB)[3,4]	170
Total[5]	376,600

[1] The benefits included are DLA, SDA, IIDB and IS with a disability premium. IIDB includes reduced earnings allowance cases. A claimant can receive more than one of these benefits.
[2] DLA is payable to claimants of all ages, including children.
[3] These benefits are payable to claimants aged 16 and over.
[4] The overlap between IIDB and other benefits is negligible, and therefore the IIDB figure has been presented separately using the 100 per cent. data.
[5] The "total" number excludes overlaps between benefits. Therefore the individual benefit totals do not sum to the overall "total".
[6] Nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. 5 per cent. figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Numbers taken from a 5 per cent. sample are subject to a degree of sampling error.
2. 100 per cent. figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Sources:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. Working Age Client Group sample and 5 per cent. DLA samples.
IAD Information Centre 100 per cent. IIDB database.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Battersea Power Station

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when Battersea Power Station was last inspected by English Heritage; and what the outcome of the inspection was. [204674]

Mr. Caborn: As part of their assessment of current development proposals, English Heritage specialists have carried out regular and detailed inspections of Battersea Power Station over the past 18 months. While the overall condition of the building is poor, the most

important parts of its interior have been safeguarded and there is an ongoing programme of emergency repairs.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205132]

Mr. Caborn: The staff time spent on preparation of Christmas cards has not been logged; however it is estimated that this amounted to approximately 21 hours in total. This included sourcing images, commissioning design and print, obtaining order quantities from the Department's directorates and arranging internal distribution of the printed cards.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205133]

Mr. Caborn: One member of staff in the Department's Promotions and Publicity Unit has responsibility for preparing Christmas cards, as part of a range of duties.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205134]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS Christmas cards included no contribution to charity in their cost.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205135]

Mr. Caborn: No assessment of postage was made, but the majority of cards were sent by second class post.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205136]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The cost of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in 2003 was £3,209.

(b) The cost of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in 2004 was £3,235.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many official Christmas cards were sent out by her Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205137]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is as follows.

(a) In 2003,4,950 official Christmas cards were sent out.

(b) In 2004, 3,550 official Christmas cards were sent out.

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many items of civil service property within her Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205570]

Mr. Caborn: All losses and thefts are reported annually to Her Majesty's Treasury. In the current year there have been no reports to date of any equipment or other property being unaccounted for.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from her Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205766]

Mr. Caborn: This information is not held centrally. To collect and analyse it would involve disproportionate costs.

County Hall

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when County Hall, London, SE1 was last inspected by English Heritage; and whether English Heritage judged at the most recent inspection that the building was being properly preserved. [204675]

Mr. Caborn: English Heritage recently visited County Hall, London, SE1 on 15 December 2004. They consider the building to be in a sound, weather tight and secure condition.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent by her Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205603]

Mr. Caborn: All furniture is purchased. Details of expenditure at this level is no longer available for the period 1997–2000.

The cost of furniture in subsequent years is as follows:

	£
2001	42,526.19
2002	97,028.08
2003	179,963.18
2004	116,950.95

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department spent on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205623]

Mr. Caborn: Figures for the indoor plants for the years 1997 to 1999 are no longer available. The cost of hire and maintenance of indoor plants was £10,800 in 2000, £11,070 in 2001, £11,347 in 2002, £11,630 in 2003 and £11,921 in 2004. DCMS has no outdoor landscaping or plants.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of refurbishments in her Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205665]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Members for North-East Cambridgeshire (Mr. Moss) and for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 15 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 1268, and 8 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 510 respectively. There are no plans for refurbishment in the 2005–06 financial year.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent by her Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205746]

Mr. Caborn: The utility cost of lighting is inseparable from the cost of electricity. The only lighting units purchased have been part of suspended ceiling installations or task lighting. The cost of lighting as distinct from the total suspended ceiling cost is not available. The cost of purchasing task lighting has not exceeded £200 in any year since 1997.

Electrical Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many items of electrical equipment were used by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205723]

Mr. Caborn: Every member of staff has the use of a personal computer, linked on a shared basis to desktop printers. Fax machines serve each sub-unit. Those aside, the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Initiatives (Young People)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list each programme and initiative launched by her Department to help young people since 1997; and which of those programme initiatives remain in operation. [200263]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The following table lists programmes and initiatives launched by the Department to help young people since 1997:

Programme/initiative	*Date launched*	*Still in operation?*
Education Challenge Fund (Museums and Galleries)	1999	No—ended in 2001 (time limited programme)
Free Admission to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries which previously charged	1999	Yes
Youth Music	1999	Yes
Your Creative Future Booklet and Website (DCMS in partnership with the Design Council and Arts Council England)	2000	Yes
Space For Sport And Arts	2000	Yes
Artsmark	2001	Yes
Step into Sport	2002	Yes
Club Links	2002	Yes
Get REAL	2003	Yes
Creative Partnerships	2002	Yes
PESSCL Strategy (DfES/DCMS)	2002	Yes
WebPlayUK	2003	Yes
Renaissance in the Regions (Education Strand, improving services for children and young people)	20[illegible]	Yes
DCMS/DfES Strategic Commissioning-National/Regional Museums Education Partnerships	2003	Yes
ArtisanCam	2004	Yes
Headline History	2004	Yes
Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme	2004	Yes
PAYP/Splash Extra	1999–2002—Splash 2003—PAYP	No—Splash Yes—PAYP
English Heritage (EH) programme whereby a young person can gain free admission if accompanied by an adult EH member	2002	Yes
Culture Online	2002	Yes

Disabilities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many of the staff employed by her Department have a declared disability. [205559]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport currently employs 12 people declaring a disability. Data on disability is collected on the basis of voluntary self-classification.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the extent to which her Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205558]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS has a Public Service Agreement (PSA) aimed at increasing the take up of cultural and sporting opportunities from priority groups (including ethnic minorities), which reflects the importance placed by this department on meeting the needs of this group. Prominent examples of work to meet the needs of ethnic minorities among the bodies we sponsor are the Museums' Association's Diversify project, which helps to persuade people from ethnic minority backgrounds to take up a career in museums and galleries; and the active encouragement of increased numbers of visitors from ethnic minorities by museums. Within the broadcasting sector we have encouraged the development of the Cultural Diversity Network, which aims to increase the entry of ethnic minority groups into the media.

International Sports Bodies

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list international sports bodies based in the UK, broken down by location. [205927]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is as follows:

Location	*Name of body*
London	International Cricket Council
—	International Tennis Federation
—	Commonwealth Games Federation
—	Federation Internationale de l'Automobile Foundation
—	Women's International Squash Players Association
Cheltenham	International Badminton Federation
Hastings	World Squash Federation
—	European Squash Federation
Manchester	International Federation of Netball Associations
Aylesbury	International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation
Bristol	World Snooker
—	World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association
Cardiff	World Squash Players' Association
Perth	World Curling Federation
Edinburgh	World Bowls
Fife	Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list international sports bodies which have left the UK since 1997, broken down by year of departure. [205928]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is as follows:

Year of departure	*Name of body*	*Details*
1997	International Rugby Board	Relocated from London to Dublin, Ireland.
2001	International Table Tennis Federation	Relocated from St. Leonard's-on-Sea to Lausanne, Switzerland.
2005	International Badminton Federation	Have made the decision to relocate from Cheltenham to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in October 2005

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff in her Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205816]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS has had 11 cases of computer misuse in the last five years, all occurring in one year, 1999.

Category: Accessing inappropriate material on the internet

2 cases:

one final formal written warning issued

one resignation.

Category: Inappropriate use of e-mail

9 cases:

1 instant dismissal

5 oral warnings issued

3 final formal written warnings issued.

Licensed Premises

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the proposed change in fees payable by licensed premises consequent upon the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003. [205742]

Mr. Caborn: On 4 November we began a consultation on the fee levels payable under the Licensing Act 2003. A copy of the consultation document is available at www.culture.gov.uk and a copy has also been placed in the House Libraries. This document shows the details of the fees currently payable under existing licensing regimes and the proposed fees under the 2003 Act. Fees payable for individual licensed premises under the 2003 Act may be higher or lower depending on their Non Domestic Rateable Value. The Government's policy is that licensing fees must be set at a level that allows full recovery of the administration, inspection and enforcement costs falling on licensing authorities.

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list her official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans she has to establish a public register of such information. [202406]

Mr. Caborn: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's official spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers' public engagements.

Motor Racing

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what financial assistance the Government has provided to Formula One racing in each year since 1997; and what the planned level of assistance is for each year up to 2006. [205052]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have provided no financial assistance to the British Grand Prix since 1997. Nor does it plan to do so in the future.

Senior Women

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many women there are in senior positions in her Department. [205560]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has 30 senior civil servants, of which 10 (33 per cent.) are women.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if she will list the attributable

interviews that her Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201400]

(2) if she will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that her Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201461]

Mr. Caborn: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204304]

Mr. Caborn: No DCMS special advisers have appeared before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity.

Taskforces

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department spent on task forces and similar bodies in each year since 1997. [204875]

Mr. Caborn: Expenditure on taskforces and similar bodies since 1997, for which records are readily available, is as follows (figures have been rounded to the nearest £1,000):

	£
	Total
2000–01	52,000
2001–02	36,000
2002–03	—
2003–04	8,000
2004–05	80,000

This expenditure is not separately identifiable in the Department's accounts.

The are a number of smaller bodies which would have been included in the answer, except that their costs were borne by the Department's central administration budgets, and could be disaggregated only at disproportionate cost.

Telephone Useage

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by her Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205840]

Mr. Caborn: The Department does not operate any non-geographic 0870 numbers.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much revenue her Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205850]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has received no revenue from the use of non-geographic 0870 numbers.

VisitBritain

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if she will make a statement on her strategy for meeting the National Audit Office recommendations made in its recent report on VisitBritain on *(a)* long-term returns, *(b)* measuring and reporting return on investment, *(c)* ensuring good communication through VisitBritain with the tourism sector and *(d)* ensuring that the tourism industry gives feedback to VisitBritain; [204655]

(2) if she will make a statement on her strategy for meeting the National Audit Office recommendations made in its recent report on VisitBritain on ensuring there is clarity of roles and responsibilities among organisations within the tourism industry. [204656]

Mr. Caborn: The Department and VisitBritain are presently considering how best to implement the recommendations contained in the National Audit Office's report, VisitBritain: Bringing Visitors to Britain. In particular:

(a) VisitBritain was already reviewing its evaluation of both short and long-term returns prior to the publication of the report, and is now in the process of investigating a number of options for improving the evaluation of its longer term activities in new and emerging markets, and of its efforts to establish the Britain brand.

(b) In measuring and reporting on return on investment, VisitBritain currently uses a ratio which compares levels of DCMS grant in aid to the additional visitor spending generated. ViistBritain plans to improve this methodology to include all its income sources, both public and private. Other technical changes in the weighting formulae used are also planned.

(c) and *(d)* VisitBritain is considering how best to respond to the recommendations on communication and industry feedback, by means of initiatives such as Sector Clubs and other partnership projects with the industry and the wider sector. Detailed implementation proposals will be reviewed with the National Audit Office in March 2005.

Those implementation proposals will also address the office's recommendation concerning VisitBritain's role and responsibilities in relation to those of other publicly funded tourism bodies.

HEALTH

A and E Departments

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many accident and emergency departments there are in England. [205300]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* There are 155 trusts with at least one major accident and emergency department.

Abortions

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women over 24 weeks pregnant have received abortions in Spanish clinics paid for in whole or part from public funds in each of the last three years. [202713]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* This information is not collected centrally. However, the Chief Medical Officer will provide contextual information when he reports, as requested by Secretary of State for Health, on the alleged links between the British Pregnancy Advisory Service and a Spanish clinic.

Acute Spinal Cord Injury

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of findings of research in *(a)* the US and *(b)* the UK into the early use of methylprednisolone in acute spinal cord injury; and if he will make a statement; [204992]

(2) if he will authorise further research into the effectiveness of early use of methylprednisolone in acute spinal cord injury; [204993]

(3) what guidance his Department issues on the early use of methylprednisolone in acute spinal injury trauma; [204994]

(4) which NHS hospital trusts in England prescribe the use of methylprednisolone in the early treatment of acute spinal cord injury. [204995]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* We are committed to keeping all interventions and treatment regimes under review and will consider commissioning guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) if a treatment will have a significant impact on patient care, national health service resources, Government health-related policies or the ability to add value by, for example, resolving uncertainty over appropriate use. We have no plans at this time to refer to NICE the use of methylprednisolone in the treatment of spinal cord injury.

A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of hospital-based spinal cord injuries, commissioned by NHS health technology assessment programme, was completed in 2003. The review included an assessment of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of steroids for people with such injuries. A full report of the review can be found at www.ncchta.org/project.

Information on the prescribing of methylprednisolone within secondary care settings is not collected centrally.

Antidepressants

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what publicly-funded support is available to people who wish to stop taking antidepressant medication. [206275]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not centrally available. Publicly funded health and social care services for people wishing to withdraw from antidepressant medication can be accessed through general practitioners.

The Department also provides funding to Mind under Section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968. Mind has been granted £50,000 in 2003–04 and £50,000 in 2004–05 for the "Coping with Coming Off (Information and Support for Drug Withdrawal)" project, which will systematically explore people's experiences of coming off or trying to come off psychiatric drugs with the aim of improving the understanding of what makes withdrawal more or less likely to be successful. A stakeholder conference will discuss the findings and make recommendations for information provision, service development and training. Mind will then develop information for service users and practitioners to help facilitate withdrawal and will promote the project's conclusions to the professions and their training bodies.

Audiology Services

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to ensure that the present funding levels for NHS audiology services are maintained after April 2005. [204738]

Dr. Ladyman: The figures for 2005–06 are not yet decided.

The funding will not end in April 2005. From 2005–06, it is proposed that the funding will be allocated to primary care trusts and strategic health authorities. They will be responsible for continuing the service.

Benjamin Road Day Centre

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what day services are available to people with mental health problems at the Benjamin Road Day Centre in Wycombe. [205451]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* Within our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", supported by other national policy documents, primary care trusts (PCTs), in conjunction with their strategic health authorities (SHAs) and other stakeholders are responsible for planning and developing services for local people based on their assessment of health needs.

I am advised by Thames Valley SHA that the Benjamin Road Day Centre in Wycombe continues to offer a wide range of group work, and one-to-one sessions for people with severe and enduring mental health issues.

Bradford Foundation Hospital Trust

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) who will meet the £11 million projected deficit of the Bradford Foundation Hospital Trust; and whether

Monitor has approved any borrowing by the Bradford Foundation Hospital Trust against the assets of the trust; [206263]

(2) whether he expects services to patients to be reduced as a result of the projected £11 million deficit of the Bradford Foundation Hospital Trust. [206264]

Mr. Hutton: Monitor (the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of national health service foundation trusts) is an independent corporate body established under the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. The role of Monitor is to authorise, monitor and regulate national health service foundation trusts (NHSFTs), so that they deliver NHS services to NHS patients effectively, efficiently and economically in accordance with their statutory obligations.

I am informed by the Chairman of Monitor that the appointment of Peter Garland as interim Chairman of Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHSFT in place of John Ryan will strengthen the trust's leadership and ensure that it takes effective action to address its financial position; improve relations with the local health economy and properly adjust to the cultural and organisational challenges of being a NHSFT.

The trust is required to meet its deficit by working towards a recovery plan. As interim Chairman, it will be Mr. Garland's responsibility to lead the trust through this process while at the same time ensuring that the trust continues to provide high quality clinical care and meets national standards.

NHSFTs are able to borrow, including from the private sector, within aggregate limits set by Monitor, through the prudential borrowing code, and specified in their terms of authorisation. They are not able to borrow against their assets. I am informed by the Chairman of Monitor that the code was issued for public consultation earlier this year and is now being finalised prior to it being laid before Parliament.

As my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State said on 8 December 2004 to the Health Select Committee, although this is a matter for Monitor and not one in which either he or his colleagues can formally intervene, Ministers will maintain a dialogue with the West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority and Monitor over the provision of healthcare in Bradford.

Breast Care

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will review the role of clinical nurse specialists in breast care, with particular reference to *(a)* new roles being undertaken by breast care nurses and *(b)* the support, resources and training needed to undertake these roles; [205749]

(2) what steps he is taking to ensure the *(a)* recruitment and *(b)* retention of sufficient numbers of breast care nurses; and if he will make a statement. [205751]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government are implementing a range of measures to recruit more nurses into the national health service. These including improving pay through "Agenda for Change", encouraging the NHS to become a more flexible and diverse employer, increasing training, investing in childcare and continuing professional development, attracting back returners and running national and international recruitment campaigns. As at March 2004, there were 396,359 NHS nurses, an increase of 77,500 since 1997. This overall increase in nurses working in the NHS will enable the recruitment of additional nurse specialists, chemotherapy nurses, district nurses, palliative care nurse specialists and additional nurses on wards caring for cancer patients.

It is for cancer networks to work in partnership with strategic health authorities and work force development directorates to assess, plan and review their work force needs and the education and training of all staff linked to local and national priorities for cancer, including implementation of NICE guidance on improving outcomes in breast cancer.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy *(a)* to recommend to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence that it introduce guidance on the maximum caseloads for breast care nurses in its forthcoming review of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment and *(b)* to direct NHS trusts to implement guidance on maximum caseloads for breast care nurses. [205750]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is an independent body. The processes by which it determines the recommendations of its guidance and how guidance may be influenced by stakeholders is published on the NICE'S website at: www.nice.org.uk.

Cancer networks work in partnership with strategic health authorities and workforce development directorates to assess, plan and review their workforce needs, taking into account recommendations made by NICE.

Breast Milk Banks

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to increase the number of breast milk banks; and if he will make a statement. [204211]

Dr. Ladyman: The provision of breast milk banks is a matter for local decision. We are currently examining the evidence base in support of the suggested benefits from donated breast milk for use by premature babies, which include a reduction in the incidence of infection, of necrotising enterocolitis and providing for an earlier tolerance of enteral feeds. Although mothers and their donated milk are screened before use, there remain concerns about the potential for transmission of infectious agents from human milk.

Cancer Care

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make available through cancer networks financial audits of the last week of life of cancer patients. [202233]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We are not aware of any financial audit for the last week of life.

Care Homes (Cleanliness)

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of infection control standards in care homes. [204583]

Dr. Ladyman: The Commission for Social Care Inspection is responsible for ensuring that care homes comply with the care homes regulations, taking account of the national minimum standards.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress the Public Health Medicine and Environmental Group has made on updating the existing guidance on infection control in nursing homes. [204611]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The public health medicine and environment group is currently revising and updating the guidance set out in "Guidelines on the Control of Infection in Residential and Nursing Homes". They are making good progress and we expect the final guidance to be published in mid 2005.

Celebrating our Cultures

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether additional training will be offered to general practitioners through "Celebrating our Cultures" on recognising mental illness in ethnic minorities. [203606]

Ms Rosie Winterton: "Celebrating our Cultures: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities" provides information about mental health promotion with black and minority ethnic communities, and the evidence to support it, to inform the delivery of local mental health promotion strategies. The guide is intended for wide range of people with a role in promoting the mental health of black and minority communities, including general practitioners.

General practice vocational training in England and Wales, which takes a minimum of three years postgraduate training following medical school and pre-registration year, is supervised and approved by the joint committee on postgraduate training for general practice. Periods of hospital training in particular specialities are required by the regulations. These include, for example, general medicine, paediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatry and obstetrics. All trainee GPs gain first hand experience of dealing with the full range of health problems of national health service patients during their time in general practice, including those of people from diverse backgrounds. We are not aware of plans at present time to offer general practitioners additional training on recognising mental illness in ethnic minorities.

"Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care", which will be published very shortly, will include actions to improve the delivery of mental health services to people from black and minority ethnic communities in primary care.

Cialis (Counterfeiting)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the route of access for the counterfeit supplies of the drug cialis that were recently discovered in the legitimate wholesale medicines supply chain has been identified; what action his Department has taken to prevent the circulation of counterfeit cialis; and if he will make a statement; [201687]

(2) what evidence he has received that supplies of counterfeit cialis and reductil have been discovered in the legitimate medicines supply chain; and whether he has received evidence that such supplies have passed through the licensed parallel trade supply chain in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* other EU member states. [201688]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The enforcement group of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are investigating suspected criminal offences involving the supply of counterfeit cialis and reductil via the legitimate supply chain. The route of access is one aspect of the investigation, but details cannot be disclosed while this investigation continues.

The date officers from the criminal investigation unit have discovered counterfeit cialis and enforcement action has been taken to remove them from the supply chain.

The MHRA investigates all allegations of counterfeit medicines in the United Kingdom, the vast majority of which are not associated with the tightly regulated legitimate supply chain. Action in the form of legal proceedings is taken if appropriate.

The MHRA routinely carries out market surveillance by sampling and testing medicines on the UK market for authentication. It is also consulting with pharmaceutical industry concerning technical developments in product security.

Action to prevent circulation of the counterfeit product includes a recall at patient level through the MHRA defective medicines reporting centre. MHRA inspectors and Royal Pharmaceutical Society inspectors have increased monitoring of product batch numbers during routine inspections of wholesalers and pharmacies.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to increase the availability of cognitive behavioural therapy. [206009]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national mental health choice forum, which was convened in September 2004 by the National Institute for Mental Health in England, has been asked to produce a strategy for extending patient choice across the range of mental health services. The Forum will consider how best to increase the availability of all talking treatments including cognitive behaviour therapy.

The Department also published "Organising and Delivering Psychological Services" in July, which aims to support the delivery of psychological therapy services by highlighting the key issues of access, waiting times, and improving care pathways.

Coventry Primary Care Trust

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what budget was granted to the Coventry Primary Care Trust in each of the last three years. [205304]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the unified allocations to Coventry Primary Care Trust (PCT) for each of the years 2002–03 to 2004–05.

	Allocations (£ million)
2002–03	264.7
2003–04	289.9
2004–05	318.4

Note:
In 2002–03, the Department made allocations to health authorities (HAs) and HAs made allocations to PCTs.
From 2003–04, the Department has made allocations direct to PCTs.

Dental Nurses

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the merits of training dental nurses to conduct simple regular dental check-ups. [204823]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are working with General Dental Council to develop team working in dentistry by providing for the registration of additional classes of professional complementary to dentistry including dental nurses. The new contractual arrangements we are to introduce from October 2005, which involve the delegation of the commissioning of national health service dentistry to primary care trusts, will provide or greater scope for innovation in the delivery of dental care.

Dental Practice Board

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the likely impact of the new dentists' contract on the workload of the Dental Practice Board. [204266]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has regular meetings with the Dental Practice Board to assess the impact of the new dentists' contract on its operations.

Dentistry

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists he expects to recruit from *(a)* Poland, *(b)* Germany, *(c)* Denmark and *(d)* Spain in 2004–05. [202276]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department intends to recruit approximately 230 dentists from its recruitment in Poland. No firm estimates have yet been made of recruitment from Germany, Spain and Denmark. In addition, some primary care trusts carry out recruitment activity themselves.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the recruitment agencies used to recruit dentists from *(a)* Poland, *(b)* Germany, *(c)* Denmark and *(d)* Spain; and what the cost of using them has been. [202278]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No recruitment agencies have been used to recruit dentists apart from Poland, where a contract was placed with Methods Consulting. The value of this contract is £3.8 million for recruitment of dentists from Poland.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of dentists' time was spent on NHS work on *(a)* 1 April 1990, *(b)* 1 April 1997 and *(c)* 1 April 2004. [201039]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The available information is in Appendix E of the supplement to the thirtieth report 2001 of the "Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration"—Cm 4999.

In table 89, in March 2000, mean hours per week of a general dental practitioner on general dental service (GDS)—national health service—work were 25.13 hours, with 7.91 hours on private practice and with 1.16 hours shared time. GDS time as a percentage of GDS time and private practice time in March 2000 was 76 per cent.

A 1991 workload survey gave GDS time of 26.43 hours and private time of 2.5 hours, with 3.02 hours shared time. The GDS time as a percentage of GDS time and private practice time in 1991 was 91 per cent.

We are to introduce new contractual arrangements for NHS dentistry from October 2005, which are intended to make NHS dentistry more attractive to dentists. One of the main changes is the replacement of the treatment-based, item-of-service method of paying dentists with a remuneration package derived from an evidence-based assessment of patients' overall oral health care needs. This will enable dentists to spend more time with their patients and reward them for giving oral health promotion advice.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists moved to entirely private practice in each month of the latest year for which figures are available. [204081]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department only collects information on national health service dentistry and therefore no information can be provided for private dentistry. Relatively few dentists practise totally privately. The Office of Fair Trading report, "The private dentistry market in the UK", published in March 2003, estimated that out of 11,000 dental practices, about 210 are totally private.

Mr. Walter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices are operating in North Dorset constituency; and how many of those practices are accepting new adult patients. [204869]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* The nhs.uk website shows 13 general and personal dental service practices in North Dorset Primary Care Trust (PCT) at 10 December 2004.

The number of general and personal dental service practices shown on the nhs.uk website as accepting new adult national health service patients in North Dorset PCT is shown in the table. This is given at 10 December 2004.

Some dental practices not shown on the nhs.uk website as taking on new patients may be doing so.

	Number of practices
Registering charge exempt adults for NHS treatment	2
Registering charge paying adults for NHS treatment	1

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average annual payment made by the NHS to a dentist working full-time, and with a wholly NHS patient list, was in each of the last three years. [201850]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on private working of national health service dentists is not routinely available.

The average annual payment in 2003–04 to general dental service (CDS) dentists was £150,000 to dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS. Dentists with a reasonable commitment are defined as dentists earning at least £57,300 in fees for treatments and patient capitation.

The corresponding annual average payments in 2001–02 and 2002–03 were £136,000 and £143,000 respectively. The payment figures cover both fees for treatments and patient capitation as well as other payments, such as seniority payments and commitment payments and payments for maternity and sickness. The payments cover both income to the dentists as well as their expenses.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to improve NHS dental provision in Bolton, North-East. [203363]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Bolton Primary Care Trust (PCT) received £207,000 in 2004–05 from dental modernisation funds for one-off payment grants. This allocation will enable the primary care trust to invest in primary care premises and facilities to improve dental access and quality.

In addition, Bolton PCT received £89,000 from a national distribution of £15 million to primary care trusts for local access initiatives to support access, quality and choice.

A further £30,000 was allocated to Bolton PCT specifically to modernise its salaried dental services in preparation for the move to the model of primary dental care services in 2005. This dental access funding allocated to Bolton PCT will facilitate an increase in primary dental provision for an additional 4,137 patients.

There have also been successful negotiations with 19 dental practices to provisionally move to personal dental services and it is expected that a number of these will be in place by early 2005. These new contacts plan for a further significant growth in new patient registrations.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS registered dentists there were in *(a)* St. Ives constituency and *(b)* Cornwall in each of the past 10 years for which records are available. [205001]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* The number of general and personal dental service dentists in the Cornwall area by primary care trust at June each year from 1995 to 2004 is shown in the table.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists in Cornwall PCTs at June each year: 1995 to 2004

	PCT			
	Central Cornwall	*North and East Cornwall*	*West of Cornwall*	*Total*
1995	68	50	48	166
1996	65	51	50	166
1997	69	48	52	169
1998	78	51	56	185
1999	94	48	47	189
2000	104	51	49	204
2001	115	46	53	214
2002	118	50	53	221
2003	124	44	56	224
2004	122	45	57	224

Notes:

1. PCTs took responsibility for dental services from October 2002. Therefore, for the dates in the table up to 2002, dentists are assigned to areas using practice postcodes. The personal dental service affects the figures from June 1999 onwards; some dentists in the personal dental service switched from other national health service dental services.

2. Dentists working in more than one PCT are counted in each PCT where they do dental work.

Source:

Dental Practice Board.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists have practices in the Coventry area; and what steps are being taken to recruit more dentists to the area. [201814]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* At 30 November 2004, there were 43 general dental service practices within the Coventry Primary Care Trust (PCT) area.

Coventry PCT is taking an active part in the Department's international recruitment campaign. A dentist from Poland is expected to commence work in Coventry in February 2005. This new dentist is expected to result in an additional 2,000 patients being registered over a period of 12 months. Two further posts have been offered to Polish dentists.

The PCT is continuing to participate in the campaign. The PCT recruited a dental practice advisor in November 2004 to offer support to dental practices. The PCT is also recruiting a new consultant in dental public health, to start work early in 2005, to assist in the development of dentistry in Coventry.

As part of the personal dental services (PDS) scheme, Coventry PCT is looking to increase list sizes in the areas of greatest need and to offer services to hard to reach communities and care homes.

West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority reports that the PCT is currently in discussions with eleven of its practices around the PDS scheme. One practice has already signed up to the scheme. The others are currently being processed. The PCT is hoping to gain an additional five—part-time national health service—dentists as part of these discussions.

13 practices in the area have been awarded capital grants as a means of improving access to NHS services for patients.

Overall, Coventry PCT is expecting to see an increase of 4,500 places on dental practice lists over the next 12 months.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [200787]

Ms Rosie Winterton: My hon. Friend, the former Minister for the Cabinet Office, Ruth Kelly, has asked Nick Matheson, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the cost of ministerial vehicles provided to this Department in 2003–04.

Information on ministerial vehicles for the financial year 2002–03 was similarly provided in a letter deposited in the Library, referred to in the response given on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 397–98W by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The cost of taxis for the last two years was:

	£000
	Cost
2002–03	337
2003–04	403

The Department ensures that all business travel is made by the most economic means, taking into account any management benefit and the needs of staff with disabilities.

Depression

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people he estimates to have *(a)* mild and *(b)* severe depression. [205185]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the requested format. According to the Office for National Statistics' report, "Psychiatric morbidity among adults living in private households (2000)", 88 per 1,000 people were assessed as having mixed anxiety and depressive disorder and 26 per 1000 were assessed as having a depressive episode. A copy of this report is available in the Library.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been diagnosed with *(a)* mild and *(b)* severe depression in each of the last five years. [205186]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the requested format. The Department provides hospital episode statistics data which relates to diagnostic information for in-patients in national health service hospitals. During their course of treatment over a period of time, patients may have a number of episodes of care, which are counted each time they have a stay in hospital. Information relating to diagnosis where a patient is still under the care of a hospital consultant is not recorded. Information on finished consultant episodes with a primary diagnosis of depression in each of the last five years is shown in the table.

Finished consultant episodes for patients with a primary diagnosis of depression (F33), NHS hospitals, England

	Total
1998–99	47,929
1999–2000	45,395
2000–01	43,395
2001–02	42,063
2002–03	34,376

Notes:
Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid data, except for 2002–03, which are not adjusted for shortfalls. A finished consultant episode is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14—seven prior to 2002–03—diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
Source:
Hospital episode statistics, Department of Health.

Doctors Surgeries

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors' surgeries there are in England. [205299]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* The total number of doctors' surgeries is not held centrally. It is believed that the number of main and branch surgeries is around 10,500 but the actual number is regularly changing as a result of improvement, replacement and closure of surgeries.

Electronic Clinical Records

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what regulations he expects to propose in respect of the National Programme for IT electronic record sharing under section 60 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. [205486]

Mr. Hutton: I have no plans to introduce regulations in respect of the national programme for information technology electronic data sharing under section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001.

Employment Terms and Conditions

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what schemes *(a)* are in place and *(b)* are being assessed by his Department to encourage employers to use temporary job modifications to help people back to work, as referred to in the Choosing Health White Paper. [202275]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Temporary workplace modification is a key component of helping people back to work in the incapacity benefit reform pilots and a four arm randomised controlled trial—the job retention and rehabilitation pilots—are being jointly sponsored

by the Departments of Health and Work and Pensions. These schemes are being evaluated, but the results are not expected until 2005–06.

We are looking for evidence of the effectiveness of temporary job modifications in the NHS Plus evidence guideline project; the first guideline on the management of mild to moderate mental ill health in the workplace is expected to be published in the second half of 2005.

We will continue to support the on-going work on the further development of vocational rehabilitation.

Fluoride

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has commissioned on the causes of bone cancer which has included assessment of exposure to fluoride. [203368]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2001, the Department commissioned the Medical Research Council (MRC) to provide advice on current scientific evidence regarding the health effects of fluorides in the context of water fluoridation. In September 2002, the MRC published the report "Water Fluoridation and Health". It stated that the available evidence does not suggest a link between water fluoridation and either cancer in general or any specific cancer type, including osteosarcoma, primary bone cancer, but recommended the Department monitored data collected on the incidence of cancer so that any aberrant trends in populations receiving fluoridated water could be investigated. We are acting on this suggestion.

Foundation Hospitals

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on which matters foundation hospitals are required to report to the *(a)* Healthcare Commission and *(b)* Monitor. [206262]

Mr. Hutton: National health service foundation trusts (NHSFTs) are subject to national standards set by the Secretary of State, performance ratings, and systems of inspection, like all other NHS trusts. However, accountability for NHSFTs is to local people and staff, NHS commissioners, Monitor, the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of NHSFTs, and Parliament, rather than to the Department and Ministers.

The role of the Healthcare Commission is to conduct annual reviews and where necessary investigations into the provision of NHS healthcare, and publish performance ratings for NHSFTs, taking into account their performance against national standards and targets in the same manner it does for all NHS bodies. The Healthcare Commission may therefore review any data relating to the provision of NHS healthcare by NHSFTs. The role of Monitor is to oversee compliance by NHSFTs within boundaries detailed in the terms of authorisation, and also the legislation. The terms of authorisation sets out the conditions under which NHSFTs must operate and requires them to take into account national standards. Monitor has recently issued its compliance regime for NHSFTs for consultation—available at www.nhsft-regulator.gov.uk—which details the level of information on compliance with the terms of authorisation that NHSFTs are required to provide to Monitor in-year. Both Monitor and the Healthcare Commission are subject to a statutory duty to cooperate with one another in the exercise of their respective functions. In collaboration with the Healthcare Commission, Monitor is reviewing NHSFTs' current external reporting with a view to reducing the information burden substantially.

Midwives

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many wards have been closed over the last year because of midwife shortages. [204208]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally. The Government are increasing the number of midwives working in the national health service. We expect that there would be 2,000 more midwives working in the NHS by the end of 2005 than there were in 2000. In September 2003, there were over 1,300 more NHS midwives than there were in 2000, on course to meet this expectation.

Health Services

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital investment his Department has made in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency in the past three years. [201101]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not collected for parliamentary constituencies. However, the South East London Strategic Health Authority reports that, in recent years, over £800 million has been invested to develop healthcare in South East London and that other capital schemes are at a planning stage.

These developments include the private finance initiative redevelopment of Lewisham hospital with a capital value of £72 million, which reached financial close on 8 July 2004 and is due to receive its first patient in the autumn of 2006.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff there have been in the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals Trust in each year of its existence, set out in the same manner as in his answer to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Ruffley) on 8 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1277W. [204427]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS): Medicine and dental staff and non-medical staff in the Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals National Health Service Trust as at 30 September each specified year

Numbers (headcount)

As at 30 September:	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Medical and dental Staff	974	967	1,073	1,136	1,173	1,190
Non-medical staff:	6,908	8,322	8,385	9,044	9,575	9,634
of which						
Professionally qualified clinical staff	3,691	4,408	4,222	4,614	4,973	5,054
Qualified nurses	2,827	3,398	3,213	3,539	3,616	3,613
Allied health professionals	329	394	394	417	383	419
Other qualified St and t	535	616	615	658	974	1,022
Support to clinical staff	2,111	2,630	2,891	2,722	2,873	3,568
Support to doctors and nurses	1,724	2,135	2,429	2,202	2,358	2,963
Support to St and t	387	495	462	520	515	605
NHS infrastructure support	1,105	1,283	1,272	1,690	1,729	1,012
Other and unknown	1	1	0	16	0	0

Note:
The increase in support to clinical staff and the decrease in NHS infrastructure staff 2002–03 is as a result of the reclassification of occupation codes of staff within these areas.
Sources:
Department of Health non-medical workforce census.
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were on NHS *(a)* alcohol and *(b)* drug rehabilitation schemes in the Newcastle City Primary Care Trust area in each year since 1998–99. [204615]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on numbers for alcohol treatment is not collected centrally. Data for the number of individuals on drug rehabilitation schemes is not available in the format requested. However, the available data is shown in the table.

In 2003–04, there were 805 people in contact with structured drug treatment in the Newcastle upon Tyne drug action team area. This figure is not directly comparable to previous years as new criteria were introduced in 2003–04, which means that we are not able to make a direct comparison with previous years. National data was produced for 2001–02 and 2002–03, but this data was not verified at a local level.

Number of users reported as presenting for treatment for drug misuse in Newcastle and North Tyneside health authority during six month periods ending 30 September 1998 to 31 March 2001

Six month period ending	*Newcastle and North Tyneside health authority*
September 1998	224
March 1999	393
September 1999	387
March 2000	274
September 2000	460
March 2001	366

Note:
Reporting to the regional drug misuse databases was voluntary; changes in the numbers of users presenting may, at least in part, be due to changes in reporting practice.
Source:
The Department of Health series of statistical bulletins 'Statistics from the Regional Drug Misuse Databases'. Bulletins for the six months ending September 1998 onwards are available on the Departments website at: http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/work_ public_ health.htm#SDD

Hospitals (Manchester)

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment was made of the *(a)* available and *(b)* future capacity of each Greater Manchester NHS hospital to perform operations of the kind planned for the Greater Manchester Surgical Unit as part of the assessment of the viability of that unit; and what shortfall in capacity was identified. [205058]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The assessment of local delivery options is for strategic health authorities to undertake as part of their capacity planning and local delivery planning responsibilities.

The Department issued capacity planning guidance for 2006–07 to 2007–08 to strategic health authorities (SHAs) in May 2004. The guidance recommends that the first stage of planning should be to model demand for services. This includes looking at effective local approaches to meeting national and local objectives, including options for best meeting patients' needs and the settings that allow patients to be seen most conveniently and appropriately.

Detailed information regarding the business case for the Greater Manchester Surgical Centre is not held centrally. This information can be obtained from the Greater Manchester SHA.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting times were in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 for each hospital in Greater Manchester for the areas of surgery due to be undertaken by the Greater Manchester Surgical Unit; and how many patients were on the waiting list. [205059]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money was *(a)* paid by and *(b)* withheld from each Greater Manchester primary care trust (i) for

the last two financial years and (ii) in the next year with respect to (A) the Greater Manchester Surgical Unit and (B) the Choice Initiative. [205060]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department allocated £5.3 million in 2003–04 and £4.7 million in 2004–05 to Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority (SHA) as part of the choice initiative. The funding was allocated to Salford Primary Care Trust, on behalf of the SHA.

More detailed information on how funding was distributed can be obtained from Greater Manchester SHA.

Irradiation Treatment

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether irradiation treatment of *(a)* fruit, *(b)* vegetables, *(c)* cereals, *(d)* bulbs and tubers, *(e)* spices and condiments, *(f)* fish and shellfish and *(g)* poultry is permitted in the UK. [205252]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Under current United Kingdom food irradiation regulations[1] any person can apply for a licence to irradiate food that falls within the following categories:

(a) fruit (includes fungi, tomatoes and rhubarb);

(b) vegetables (includes pulses);

(c) cereals;

(d) bulbs and tubers (potatoes, yams, onions, shallots and garlic);

(e) spices and condiments (dried substances normally used for seasoning);

(f) fish and shellfish (includes eels, crustaceans and molluscs);

(g) poultry (domestic fowls, geese, ducks, guinea fowls, pigeons, quails and turkeys).

At present, only one UK irradiation facility holds a licence to irradiate food and this licence permits the irradiation of a range of dried herbs, spices and seasonings at a facility in Swindon. Dried spices and condiments are currently the only foods that can be irradiated in the UK.

The schedules to the food irradiation regulations set out what is required in an application for a food irradiation licence and it is the Food Standards Agency who consider applications and who inspect food irradiation facilities in the UK.

Sources:

[1] The Food (Control of Irradiation) Regulations 1990 as amended. The Food (Control of Irradiation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 as amended.

Jobs Website

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who produced the business case for the jobs.nhs.uk website project; and if he will publish it. [200747]

Mr. Hutton: The Department produced the business case for the national health service e-recruitment service, www.nhs.uk/jobs. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department spent on the jobs.nhs.uk website to date; and how much he expects to spend on the website in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [200752]

Mr. Hutton: The business case shows that the planned costs of the national health service careers e-recruitment service are:

£ million

	Amount
2003–04	2.3
2004–05	2.4
2005–06	1.4
2006–07	1.4

Mental Health

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in implementing in the north-west the national service framework for mental health. [203592]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The implementation of the national service framework for mental health is envisaged to take up to 10 years. Information about improvements in local service provision that have occurred in the first five years of implementation can be obtained from the relevant strategic health authorities.

Our assessment shows that following the national service framework for mental health and supported by additional investment, people with mental health problems in England are now able to exercise more choice; be treated at home instead of hospital where appropriate; and access services more easily in an emergency.

All strategic health authorities have omitted to deliveries their shares of the national targets. Full and validated data on most of the December 2004 targets will be available and published in mid-February by when we will have a clearer picture of what the position will be at the end of March 2005. The recovery and support unit in the Department and the National Institute for Mental Health in England are supporting SHAs to manage the most challenged trusts and improve the reliability and validity of data.

A report to be published very shortly by the national director for mental health will set out the progress made nationally in the first five years of implementation.

Mixed-sex Wards

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many mixed-sex wards there are in hospitals in Greater London; and if he will make a statement. [202732]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not available in the format requested. Compliance with the requirement to provide single-sex accommodation is measured at trust level only.

In the five London strategic health authorities, 96 per cent. of national health service (NHS) trusts report that they provide single-sex sleeping accommodation. Nationally, 99 per cent. of NHS trusts meet this requirement.

Monitor

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of the re-branding of the Regulator of Foundation Hospitals as Monitor, including the cost of designing the new logo. [206260]

Mr. Hutton: I understand from the chairman of Monitor that the total costs of the design work for the development and implementation of the Monitor brand was £24,465, excluding value added tax. The total costs include £8,200 on re-branding and enhancing the website and £3,000 on the application of the new design to letterhead, business cards and presentation material. Monitor timed the introduction of its new name to coincide with its relocation to new offices, thereby minimising the additional expenditure required.

MS Decision Maker Website

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hits have been recorded on the MS Decision Maker website since it was set up; and what assessment he has made of its usefulness in helping those with multiple sclerosis decide on the most appropriate drug therapy. [204986]

Dr. Ladyman: From its launch on 9 September 2004 until December 2004, the MS decision maker website has received 6,687 individual visitors, each viewing an average of eight web pages.

An evaluation of a prototype version of the website was undertaken prior to launch. The task force on medicines partnership, who developed the website in conjunction with the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, continue to monitor its usefulness through on-line feedback.

NHS Cleaning Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in which NHS trusts cleaning services are *(a)* directly managed and *(b)* outsourced. [204904]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library. The data provided were collected during the 2003–04 patient environment action team (PEAT) programme and are listed by site as the information is not collected at trust level. It lists 705 hospital sites where it was reported that cleaning was undertaken by in-house staff and 440 hospital sites where it was reported that cleaning services were outsourced. Some sites reported that the responsibility for cleaning was split between in-house staff and contract cleaners and these sites are not listed, as we do not hold information centrally on which is the primary contract.

The 2003–04 PEAT programme ran from December 2003 to May 2004. The arrangements for cleaning in hospitals are a matter for local managers and it is possible that some of the information provided has since changed.

NHS Plus Initiative

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress with the NHS Plus Initiative. [205395]

Ms Rosie Winterton: NHS Plus was established in November 2001 to encourage the provision of occupational health services by national health service occupational health departments to external employers under the income generation arrangements. Over one hundred occupational health departments, representing approximately 50 per cent. of all NHS units, joined the scheme and research during the first two full years of operation indicated an income growth of around 16 per cent. per annum.

In addition to clinical services, NHS Plus maintains an internet website, which allows employers to identify their local provider and gives general occupational health advice. Routine monitoring of web traffic shows between 5,000 and 8,000 individual visitors per month in the first half of 2004. Thirdly, an evidence based guideline project is under way, with partners in Europe, the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom and the NHS, to develop appropriate quality guidance for all occupational health services. Five guidelines are currently being constructed with the first expected to be published in the second half of 2005.

NHS Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government's plans to increase the numbers of *(a)* school nurses and *(b)* community matrons are based on the recruitment into these posts (i) of nurses already working in the NHS and (ii) additional nurses. [200593]

Mr. Hutton: We expect new school nurse and community matron posts to be filled by a combination of additional nurses and nurses already working in the primary care. Overall, we expect that the number of nurses in working in the national health service will continue to rise.

NHS Trusts (Budgets)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the NHS trusts which have indicated that they expect a deficit exceeding 1 per cent. of their budget for 2004–05. [205415]

Mr. Hutton: The audited information in respect of the 2004–05 financial position of all national health service trusts will be published in their individual annual accounts and will be available centrally in autumn 2005. We have no plans to publish un-audited in year financial information.

Occupational Health

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to improve its capacity to raise standards of occupational health in the labour force. [205393]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As chapter seven, "Work and Health", of the public health White Paper "Choosing Health Making Healthy Choices Easier" published on 16 November makes clear, improving working conditions to reduce the causes of ill health related to work is high on the Department's agenda. Work and the rewards it brings, allows full participation in our society. Good standards of occupational health in the labour

force enable both employers and employees to tackle the cause and effects of work place ill health and go a long way to ensuring that this 'gold standard' is achieved.

The "Work and Health" chapter of the White Paper sets out how the Department intends to build on a number of already successful departmental occupational health initiatives to further increase the capacity of the provision of occupational health services in England. These include support for further development of the framework for vocational rehabilitation, increasing the availability of NHS Plus, developing further evidence based guidelines for occupational health, and publishing guidance on the management of mild to moderate mental ill health in the workplace.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what indicators he *(a)* publishes and *(b)* monitors on the relative performance of EU member states on occupational health matters. [205398]

Jane Kennedy: No internationally comparable data from official sources are available on occupational or work-related illness. Member states differ too much in data collection systems, institutional arrangements and cultural background for international comparisons to be meaningful.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the questions from the hon. Member for Birkenhead, references 201524 and 201525, tabled on 29 November. [206228]

Mr. Hutton: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 240W.

Primary Care Trusts (Compulsory Purchase)

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what powers of compulsory purchase primary care trusts (PCTs) have; and how many compulsory purchase orders have been issued by PCTs since their inception. [204187]

Mr. Hutton: Schedule 1 of the Health Act 1999 provides that a primary care trust (PCT) may be authorised to purchase land compulsorily for the purposes of its functions by means of an order made by the trust and confirmed by the Secretary of State for Health.

No order is to be made by a PCT in respect of any land unless the proposal to acquire the land compulsorily has been submitted to the Secretary of State in the form and with the information, required by him, and has been approved by him.

No requests have been received from PCTs, since their inception, for the approval of a compulsory purchase order.

Skipton Fund

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the Skipton Fund is used for administrative purposes, broken down by *(a)* rent, *(b)* business rates, *(c)* phone costs, *(d)* utilities, *(e)* costs of medical panels, *(f)* costs of processing initial decisions and *(g)* costs of processing appeals. [204567]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Skipton Fund became operational from 5 July 2004. The Skipton Fund is required to submit a record of their expenditure once a year, including administrative costs.

Surgical Urology

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of surgical urology treatments in *(a)* Bournemouth, *(b)* Winchester, *(c)* Southampton and *(d)* Dorchester was in the last period for which figures are available. [205411]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows cost per episode of surgical urology treatments in Bournemouth, Winchester, Southampton and Dorchester. The cost per episode figures supplied for patients using a bed are the closest available to the requested information. 2003–04 is the last period for which figures are available. These figures are provisional.

Cost per episode of surgical urology treatments 2003–04

	£
Bournemouth area	697.43
Winchester area	785.20
Southampton area	677.35
Dorchester area	563.40

Source:
Annual financial returns of national health service trusts and primary care trusts.

Temporary Accommodation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the effects on the health of families of living in temporary accommodation. [206261]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This Government commissioned an independent review of health inequalities by Sir Donald Acheson. The Acheson Report (1998) identified a number of links between ill health and homelessness, including for those living in temporary accommodation. For example, it found that 45 per cent. of the bed and breakfast population have experienced psychological distress, compared to 20 per cent. of the general population. Building on this and subsequent work, the Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have issued guidance to local authorities, primary care trusts and other local stakeholders, setting out how they can improve health outcomes for homeless people in their local areas—"Achieving positive shared outcomes in health and homelessness".

Vaccine Stockpiles

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms the Health Protection Agency has agreed with its equivalent agencies in the European Union to achieve common standards and stocks of national vaccine stockpiles. [204548]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* The responsibility for the vaccine stock for the United Kingdom national immunisation programme lies with the Department. The Department's aim is to ensure that there is sufficient stock of vaccines to meet the requirements for the UK.

The Health Protection Agency maintains strong links with European colleagues on a range of vaccination issues.

Ward Housekeepers

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of hospitals have ward housekeepers in place in the NHS in England. [203065]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data submitted by national health service trusts for 30 September 2004 reports that 53 per cent. of all hospitals have introduced a ward housekeeping service. This means that the NHS Plan target for half of all hospitals to have housekeepers by December 2004 has been met. For hospitals over 100 beds, which account for 86 per cent. of all beds, the percentage rises to 70.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

A3

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reason the public inquiry into the realignment of the A3 at Hindhead has been adjourned; when he expects the inquiry to end; and on what date he expects the Inspector to report. [203077]

Keith Hill: The inquiry was adjourned in response to representations made by the Highways Agency. These representations proposed scheme modifications and Revised Orders. The adjournment was necessary in order for the parties to consider the revisions and to put formal representations to the inquiry. The inquiry is due to resume on 15 February 2005.

At this stage, the Inspectors are aiming to close the inquiry before the end of February 2005 and produce their report by the summer of 2005. But this timetable will be subject to the extent of the representations to the Revised Order.

A303

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when a decision will be announced in respect of the public inquiry into the A303 strategic improvement. [203078]

Keith Hill: The Inspector is currently preparing his report. A decision will be announced by my right hon. Friends the First Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Transport jointly as soon as possible after receipt of the inquiry Inspector's report.

Affordable Housing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the status is of the rural exceptions policy for the provision of affordable housing in rural areas; and if he will make a statement on forthcoming targets. [205508]

Keith Hill: The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions published a research report in February 2002 called "Delivering Affordable Housing through Planning Policy". This reviewed the implementation of planning for affordable housing policies, including the operation of rural exception policies. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister drew on this research in proposing changes to the policy on rural exception housing, which it consulted upon last year. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 938W.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister wrote earlier this month to the Chairmen of the Regional Housing Boards on the outcomes we wish to see from the recommendations they will be making to us in May 2005 on how resources for housing capital investment should be targeted in 2006–07 and 2007–08. It was made clear in the letter that we were looking to the Boards outside London to put forward proposals for targets for rural housing in both market towns and small settlements, which will allow the targets to reflect the region's needs and priorities.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205120]

Phil Hope: A small proportion of staff time was taken up in selecting and arranging production of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Christmas Card. In addition a small number of staff across the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister were also involved in distribution of the cards. This work is carried out as part of the normal duties of people concerned and is not recorded separately.

David Davis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205121]

Phil Hope: One member of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister staff has responsibility for selecting and arranging production of the official Christmas cards as part of wider corporate communication activities.

Countryside Signage

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the level of signage in the countryside; if he will issue new guidelines to local authorities on *(a)* how to seek early removal of such signs and *(b)* the bringing of prosecutions; and if he will bring forward legislative proposals, in conjunction with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to expedite such processes. [205507]

Keith Hill: Signage is controlled by local planning authorities under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 and local authorities are already provided with guidance.

Next year the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to make new Regulations to consolidate and update the 1992 Regulations. There will be new guidance in an accompanying Circular. We intend to introduce further measures to combat fly- posting in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill.

County Hall

Mr. Banks: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what payments have been made by the Shirayama Corporation in respect of the outstanding balance on

the purchase price of County Hall, London, SE1 from the annual net-profit of the hotel and other business activities in the riverside building; [204672]

(2) what payments remain outstanding from the sale of County Hall, London, SE1 to the Shirayama Corporation of Japan; whether interest on the sum has been *(a)* paid and *(b)* requested; when the balance is due; and if he will make a statement. [204673]

Keith Hill: The contract for the sale of County Hall provided for a deferred sum of £10 million to be paid to the London Residuary Body from April 1997, subject to the full sum being paid by 2012. Following the winding up of the London Residuary Body on 29 March 1996, the London Borough of Bromley inherited the remaining rights and liabilities in respect of County Hall, including those in relation to the payment of this sum. In accordance with the contractual terms no payment had been made to Bromley before February 2004. On 6 February 2004, after obtaining expert legal and accountancy advice and after consulting the Leader's Committee of the Association of London Government, Bromley agreed to accept immediate payment of £7,800,000 in full and final settlement of the deferred sum. This sum was distributed among the London Boroughs in accordance with the provisions of the London Residuary Body (Winding Up) Order 1996.

Departmental Budget/Expenditure

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish a regional breakdown of his Department's budget allocations for 2004–05 for planned *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital expenditure on its (i) housing and homelessness, (ii) neighbourhood renewal and (iii) sustainable communities programmes. [204736]

Keith Hill: Information on regional breakdowns of expenditure is gathered annually each spring and published in Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA). (Cm 6201, April 2004). The data within PESA excludes payments to local authorities, but includes local authority expenditure on departmental programmes, and is recorded against internationally recognised headings using the UN's Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG).

Earlier this year, as part of the Spending Review, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister collected some additional information in order to provide a full breakdown of proposed budgets by region within its departmental expenditure limits for 2004–05, under functional headings. The estimated breakdown of the relevant budgets at that time for 2004–05 is tabled as follows.

£ million

	Housing and homelessness		*Neighbourhood renewal*		*Sustainable communities*	
	Resource	*Capital*	*Resource*	*Capital*	*Resource*	*Capital*
East Midlands	41	146	55	10	47	75
East	38	181	13	4	27	70
London	135	1,209	167	24	164	340
North East	29	130	93	12	96	166
North West	72	383	175	16	150	337
South East	75	392	18	5	59	104
South West	48	167	24	5	57	87
West Midlands	48	204	96	16	99	179
Yorkshire and Humber	47	313	94	11	122	228
Total	533	3,126	733	103	822	1,587

The information in the table and within PESA represents best estimates of the regional breakdowns at the time the data was collected, which was before the start of this financial year. A further analysis for 2004–05, based on budgets following winter supplementary estimates, will be produced by April 2005, and will be published in PESA.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [202453]

Phil Hope: Energy costs incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the years 2002–3 and 2003–4 are in the following table, along with the corresponding consumption data and average fuel prices. Figures are given separately for electricity and heating fuels, as well as for the total energy.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has traditionally reported energy figures separately for its central estate, the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre and the Government Office Network. For consistency this format has been retained and the data is presented in Tables la, b and c respectively.

Table la: Energy costs, consumption and average prices—The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

	Costs (£k/y)			*Consumption (MWh/y)*			*Average price (p/kWh)*		
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*Change (%)*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Change (%)*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Change (%)*
Electricity	941	886	−6	16.862	20.119	19	5.58	4.40	−21
Heating fuels	370	406	10	26.173	30.265	16	1.41	1.34	−5
Total energy	1301	1292	−1	43.035	50.384	17	3.05	2.56	−16

The increase in electrical consumption is due mostly to a rise in occupational density throughout the estate, which has resulted in increased load on the air conditioning systems. Increased use of the two gas fired Combined Heat and Power installations has also resulted in an increased use of gas, which for the purpose of this answer has been included as a heating fuel.

Table 1b: Energy costs, consumption and average prices—QEII Conference Centre

	Costs (£k/y)			Consumption (MWh/y)			Average price (p/kWh)		
	2002–03	2003–04	Change (%)	2002–03	2003–04	Change (%)	2002–03	2003–04	Change (%)
Electricity	229	330	45	6.532	7.838	20	3.50	4.22	20
Heating fuels	43	62	46	4.754	4.655	−2	0.90	1.34	49
Total energy	271	393	45	11.287	12.494	11	2.41	3.14	31

The energy used in the Conference Centre is dependent on the commercial activities undertaken. Recent refurbishment of the air-conditioning systems should improve the Centre's overall efficiency.

Table 1c: Energy costs, consumption and average prices—Government Office Network

	Costs (£M/y)			Consumption (MWh/y)			Average price (p/kWh)		
	2002–03	2003–04	Change (%)	2002–03	2003–04	Change (%)	2002–03	2003–04	Change (%)
Electricity	238	306	29	6.231	5.213	−16	3.82	5.88	54
Heating fuels	64	81	26	6.670	4.891	−27	0.96	1.65	72
Total energy	302	387	28	12.901	10.105	−22	2.34	3.83	64

Government Offices have increased their usage of electricity from renewable sources, which carry a premium. This has led to an increase in the cost of their energy, despite a reduction in the amount used.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's electricity costs have risen by 8 per cent. overall, despite a small decrease in average price, due to a 12 per cent. rise in consumption. Heating fuel costs have risen by 15 per cent., mainly due to a 9 per cent. increase in price.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is investigating options for reducing energy consumption across the estate. Surveys of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's main office buildings are being undertaken and action plans for fuel reduction produced. Early indications from these reports confirm that increased use of IT along with higher staff occupation rates per sq. m and therefore higher IT and air conditioning loads are the main contributory factors.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of ten Government Departments.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [202457]

Phil Hope: With the exception of The Planning Inspectorate's office in Bristol, the catering services within the buildings of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are contracted out on a non-cost basis, with the contractors recovering their costs through income from the services.

The cost of catering services to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol in each of the last two years are listed in the following table:

	£
2002–03	55,520
2003–04	48,174

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [202467]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) on 24 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1433W.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203306]

Phil Hope: Since May 2002, when the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed, 44 schedules have been put in place for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice

Domestic Violence

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that *(a)* Supporting People scheme reviews of local women's refuges are consistent across the country, *(b)* Supporting People reviews are undertaken by officers who have been trained in domestic violence and *(c)* the national network of refuges will be (i) sustained and (ii) developed. [206041]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working in partnership with Woman's Aid to provide training to all administering authorities on reviewing domestic violence services. This will provide consistency at a national level and ensure that officers are appropriately trained.

Domestic Violence services have been "designated" which means that the approval of the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, must be sought prior to any Supporting People funding being withdrawn. Administering Authorities must produce a five year strategy for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by March 2005. These strategies will identify local needs and priorities and we will analyse these to ensure that the disadvantaged groups have not been marginalised. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will also monitor the implementation and development of the strategy.

East of England Regional Chamber

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many members the East of England Regional Chamber has; and how much members are paid, including expenses. [201954]

Mr. Raynsford: The voluntary East of England Regional Assembly has 107 members.

Information relating to member payments and expenses is not held centrally as it is a matter for the assembly.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many unelected representatives there are in the East of England Regional Chamber; and who appointed each unelected representative. [201955]

Mr. Raynsford: The voluntary East of England Regional Assembly has 33 unelected members representing social, economic and environmental stakeholders. The full list of bodies invited by the East of England Regional Assembly to nominate stakeholders is listed as follows:

East of England Business Group (five places)

East of England Environment Forum (three places)

AUEE—Association of Universities in the East of England (one place)

TUC Regional Council (two places)

Consumer Interests—Watervoice (one place)

Living East, the Regional Cultural Consortium (three places)

Regional Grouping of National Housing Federation (one place)

Broads Authority (one place)

COVER—Community and Voluntary Sector Eastern Region (five places)

Sustainable Development Round Table (one place)

ACER—Association of Colleges in the East of England (one place)

East of England Faiths Leadership Conference (one place)

Consumer Interests—Rail Passengers

Committee East of England (one place)

Regional NHS Confederation (two places)

BENSCH (Regional Grouping of Parish Councils) (one place)

Plus a further four co-opted places

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff were employed by the East of England Regional Chamber in each of the last two years; and what the total staff costs were in each year. [201956]

Mr. Raynsford: At the end of the 2003–04 financial year the voluntary East of England Regional Assembly employed 35.5 members of staff.

The assembly currently employs 45 members of staff. The total salary budget for the financial year 2003–04 was £1,454,661 and for the current financial year is £1,722,502.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Battle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received concerning the incorporation of *(a)* micro generation of renewable energy, *(b)* domestic combined heat and power units and *(c)* energy conserving building techniques in the building regulations; and if he will make a statement. [204274]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received representations on these matters in response to the consultation last summer on proposals to revise the energy efficiency provisions in the Building Regulations in England and Wales. All the responses received will shortly be made available for inspection in the Library of the House. We are, with advice from the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, reconsidering the proposals in the light of the points made with the aim of enabling the Government to lay amending legislation next summer.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has received the results of the survey undertaken for the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes regarding levels of compliance with the 2002 changes under Part L of the Buildings Regulations; and if he will make a statement. [204556]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received the results of this survey which add to its own findings that there is cause for concern. The Government gave a commitment in the Energy White Paper to working with local authorities to see whether and how enforcement of the Building Regulations can be cost-effectively improved. Work is in progress as part of the current review of Part L and measures being considered include better guidance, dissemination and training, and expansion of the approved competent persons schemes.

European Union Decade of Roma

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what national targets he has set for improvements in the *(a)* economic status and *(b)* social inclusion of the gypsy and traveller communities for the duration of the European Union Decade of Roma Inclusion to be launched in 2005; and what progress he has made towards the establishment of the information base from which to draw comparative data. [205309]

Keith Hill: The Decade of Roma Inclusion is an initiative involving eight states in central and south-east Europe with the objective of speeding up and improving

the social inclusion and the economic status of the Roma in those countries. The United Kingdom is not a participant.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is involved in a similar initiative which aims to improve the lives of gypsies and travellers in England. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Social Exclusion Unit has recently begun work on a project focusing on improving service delivery for people who move frequently or have traditionally maintained a mobile lifestyle. The project's remit covers a number of different groups, including gypsies and travellers. The project output will be an analysis of the problem and an action plan for improvement, agreed across Government.

Fire and Rescue

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list *(a)* national incidents, *(b)* incidents in the South East region and *(c)* new dimension scale incidents involving fire and rescue services that have taken place during each of the past 10 years, broken down by (i) date and (ii) location. [205407]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203386]

Phil Hope: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Green Belt

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to alter the green belt designation. [205259]

Keith Hill: None. The process for designating green belts remains as set out in Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG)2. The Government have set a target to maintain or increase the extent of green belt designated in development plans in each English region. Since 1997 there has been a net increase of 19,300 hectares in the total area of green belts designated in development plans in England.

Homelessness

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people within the Greater London area are classified as homeless; and what the figures have been in each of the last three years. [204742]

Keith Hill: Information collected about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is in respect of households, rather than persons. Estimates of the number of households accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, by London boroughs during 2003–04, is tabled as follows.

London

	Households accepted as homeless[1]
2001–02	30,470
2002–03	31,320
2003–04	31,530

[1] Households eligible under homelessness legislation and found to be unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category.

Source:
ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much financial assistance has been spent on assisting rough sleepers in the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [204743]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grants to local authorities and voluntary and community sector organisations to support their work in sustaining the rough sleeping target, eliminate the long-term use of bed and breakfast hotels for homeless families with children and to tackle homelessness more effectively.

The level of these grants provided to local authorities and voluntary and community sector agencies working in London is tabled as follows:

(£ million)

Period	*Funding (capital and revenue)*
2002–03	[1]46.8
2003–04	[1]40.8
2004–05	[2]43.1

[1] Actual
[2] Budget

There are close links between tackling these manifestations of homelessness, it is not therefore possible to provide details of grants used exclusively on assisting rough sleepers.

Housing

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what criteria he applies to the acceptability of plans for housing in the Green Belt. [205888]

Keith Hill: The national planning policy criteria for proposed development within the Green Belt are set out in Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 2, Green Belts. Where a local planning authority proposes to allocate through the development plan land for housing provision, for example, as an urban extension, which would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it will first be necessary to alter the Green Belt

boundary. Such an alteration should only be made in exceptional circumstances and, if proposed, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister (the First Secretary of State) will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt.

PPG2 makes clear that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Where a major new housing development is proposed within the existing Green Belt, it is for the applicant to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm that such inappropriate development would cause to the Green Belt.

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will attach substantial weight to the harm to the Green Belt when considering any planning application that comes before him for inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

When considering an application for new housing, a planning authority should also have regard to the policies in PPG3, Housing.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Government grant was given to Oxfordshire county council in each of the last 10 years. [205887]

Mr. Raynsford: The amount of Government grant given to Oxfordshire County council in each of the last 10 years is shown in the table.

	Government grants (£000)
1995–96	237,103
1996–97	244,165
1997–98	252,623
1998–99	266,984
1999–2000	274,628
2000–01	304,926
2001–02	323,800
2002–03	340,102
2003–04	386,752
2004–05	429,213

Note:
These figures are not strictly comparable over time, as they are not adjusted for changes in local authority function between one year and another.

The data are outturn figures 1995–96 to 2002–03 and budget data for 2003–04 and 2004–05. The amounts are as reported by the local authority. The grants included are special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, central support protection grant, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

Muscular Dystrophy

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the timetable for his review of grants and allowances for those suffering from muscular dystrophy and their carers. [205422]

Keith Hill: The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme, for which the Office Of the Deputy Prime Minister has responsibility, provides mandatory grants to disabled people, including families with disabled children, to help them continue to live independently with their carers in their own homes.

A wide-ranging Review of the DFG programme, being undertaken jointly between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health is now underway. It will report to Ministers in May 2005 with its conclusions being published in the summer of that year.

National Planning Guidance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which national planning guidance notes issued since May 1997 have altered guidance in relation to the green belt. [205258]

Keith Hill: Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 13, Transport, published on 27 March 2001, amended green belt policy set out in PPG2 to provide additional guidance on Park and Ride schemes in the green belt.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government Office for the North West was consulted when the neighbourhood renewal funding earmarked for wards with high levels of deprivation was transferred by Liverpool city council for use in the establishment of a city of culture information office in Liverpool city centre. [204259]

Phil Hope: The use of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) is a matter for local authorities in collaboration with their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). There is no requirement to consult the Government Office (GO), though GOs do have sight of proposals through their participation in LSPs and in discussion of this particular item the Government Office of the North West sought clarification on the explicit linkage to the neighbourhood renewal strategy.

Regional Spatial Strategies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether regional spatial strategies require approval by the *(a)* Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and *(b)* Government Office for the Region. [205308]

Mr. Raynsford: Under Part 1 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) set out the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's policies for the development and use of land in the region. The draft is prepared by the Regional Planning Body and submitted to the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister usually decides to hold an examination in public and he consults on any changes he proposes before publishing the RSS in its final form. The Government Offices of the Regions carries out the necessary administrative tasks on his behalf.

Rent Assessment Panels

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether decisions on appointments to rent assessment panels may be appealed against. [204408]

Keith Hill: There are no independent review procedures that can be applied to appointments to rent assessment panels for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has responsibility. However, if an applicant considers that a decision not to appoint them was objectionable on grounds, for example, of gender or race, or the appointment process was irrational or procedurally flawed, there are ways in which decisions can be challenged in an Employment Tribunal or through the Courts. In the first instance, anyone with concerns over the appointment process should contact the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister who will check that appropriate procedures were followed.

Repossessions (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses in Pendle were re-possessed as a result of missed mortgage payments in each year since 1990. [204083]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

Information specific to Pendle is not collected. Pendle falls within the jurisdiction of Blackburn county court. The court records the number of orders for repossession made, but not the specific grounds for the proceedings on which they are based.

The table shows the total number of possession orders made at Blackburn county court, which will include proceedings for properties at Pendle. However, it is not always the case that a possession order will be enforced in every case.

Local authority and other mortgage possession orders made in Blackburn county court

	Suspended orders	*Orders*
1990	147	153
1991	279	251
1992	212	257
1993	248	209
1994	155	153
1995	198	143
1996	368	198
1997	219	144
1998	310	91
1999	306	125
2000	210	146
2001	192	121
2002	172	132
2003	172	139

Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the criteria used to decide which documents and files should be shredded; and what mechanism exists to ensure that documents and files are not destroyed for other reasons. [202101]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister keeps records for as long as they are needed for administrative and business purposes. Records of enduring historical value are selected for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of The National Archives on the basis of guidelines which are published on The National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice.

Sick Leave

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in his Office in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204519]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office.

Table A of this report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based. The most recent statistics (for calendar year 2003) were announced by written ministerial statement on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1WS and copies placed in the Libraries of the House.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister did not come into existence until 2002 the reports for the years 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 for all major Civil Service departments are available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/conditions_of_service/caje/publications/index.asp#sickness

I should also like to take this opportunity to reinforce our commitment to managing sickness absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector".

Social Housing

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the waiting lists for social housing for each local authority in the Greater London area are; and if he will make a statement. [204741]

Keith Hill: Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list (excluding tenants awaiting a transfer) as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the Housing Association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a Housing Association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

The latest information, for 2004, is tabled as follows for the 33 London boroughs:

Households on the housing waiting list at 1 April 2004

Local authority	*Number of households*
Barking and Dagenham	3,149
Barnet[1]	10,732
Bexley[1]	4,404
Brent	15,504
Bromley	3,866
Camden	15,757
City of London	914

Households on the housing waiting list at 1 April 2004

Local authority	*Number of households*
Croydon[1]	8,067
Ealing	12,808
Enfield	12,584
Greenwich	6,710
Hackney	11,016
Hammersmith and Fulham[1]	7,874
Haringey	16,920
Harrow	4,333
Havering	2,384
Hillingdon[1]	6,910
Hounslow	7,088
Islington	6,871
Kensington and Chelsea[1]	8,326
Kingston upon Thames[1]	4,465
Lambeth	12,847
Lewisham[1]	17,497
Merton	4,834
Newham	19,503
Redbridge	4,766
Richmond upon Thames[1]	4,868
Southwark	6,657
Sutton	2,145
Tower Hamlets[1]	14,575
Waltham Forest	9,016
Wandsworth	6,672
Westminster	5,667
London	279,729

[1] Denotes that the local authority has a common waiting list with the Housing Association/s in their area.

Source:

ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the additional £430 million Housing Corporation social housing grant available annually for new affordable housing from 2007–08 would previously have been available as local authority social housing grant. [204927]

Keith Hill: The additional housing funding for 2007–08 agreed in the 2004 Spending Review reflects a balance between the need to increase the provision of affordable housing and for prudent management of public finances. There was no link between with considerations in the Spending Review and the past affordable housing funding programmes.

Taskforces

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department spent on taskforces and similar bodies in each year since 1997. [204885]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Wandsworth

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Government money has been provided to the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last five years. [204745]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Romford (Mr. Rosindell) on 19 October 2004, *Official Report*, columns 572–73W.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Category A Prisoners

19. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he has taken to prevent escapes of Category A prisoners. [205655]

Paul Goggins: A wide range of security measures are taken by the Prison Service to prevent escapes of Category A prisoners. These include physical security, heightened searching arrangements, close movement control, as well as intelligence gathering and close cooperation with other agencies.

There have been no escapes of category A prisoners since 1995.

Women Prisoners

21. **Ms Munn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to reduce the number of women serving short-term prison sentences. [205657]

Paul Goggins: The Women's Offending Reduction Programme, published in March 2004, is focused on improving community based interventions for women in order to encourage a greater use of community disposals rather than short prison sentences. This work is set in the context of the new sentencing framework which aims to ensure that custody is reserved only for the most serious and persistent offenders.

Identity Cards

22. **Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the estimated cost of an identity card scheme. [205658]

Mr. Browne: The cost of biometric passports is estimated to be £415 million per annum by 2008–09. Reusing passport infrastructure for ID cards saves money on issuing both separately. The cost of introducing ID cards for UK citizens on top of passport cost is £85 million. We estimate an additional £50 million per annum to provide verification services.

In addition, as we set out in November 2003, we estimate set-up costs in the first three years to be £186 million. There will be some additional costs beyond this period. We are continuing to work on these estimates and will inform the House when we are in a position to provide updated figures.

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the conclusions of the Home Office Science and Technology Reference Group's examination of the identity cards programme. [201413]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office Science and Technology Reference group has not reached any conclusions about the Identity Cards Programme. The Group recognises there are a number of scientific and technical challenges that the programme will be tackling and it will be following up its initial discussion of the Identity Cards Programme at a later date. This is in addition to the follow-up discussions already held between some members of the Science and Technology Reference Group and Identity Card Programme staff.

The Government's Chief Scientific Adviser will also be chairing an external panel to provide systematic peer review of the scientific and technical advice provided to the Identity Cards Programme.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what entitlement British nationals who are long-term residents abroad will have to the identity cards proposed by the Government. [202658]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards scheme is for British citizens resident in the UK and foreign nationals resident for more than three months. British citizens resident overseas will only need to obtain a card at such time as they return to live in the UK.

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions in the last two years *(a)* he, *(b)* his Ministers and *(c)* officials in his Department have met (i) Aurora Computer Services Ltd. and (ii) other companies involved in providing biometric technology. [203029]

Mr. Browne: According to our records the Identity Cards Programme has not had any formal meetings with Aurora Computer Services Ltd. However, this does not exclude the possibility that Home Office officials have encountered this company when they have attended, or spoken at, conferences or other such meetings. The Identity Cards Programme has met with a range of companies, including those involved in providing biometric technology, as part of its market sounding activities and anticipates meeting with many more before a formal procurement is announced. Market sounding is the process of assessing the reaction of the market to a proposed requirement and procurement approach, and is recognised as best practice in Government procurement.

Market sounding focuses on suppliers as a whole, rather than the merits of individual suppliers. It includes no element of supplier selection (choosing suitable suppliers) or bid evaluation (looking at proposals, technical solutions or prices). There is no commitment of any kind involved—on either side nor any advantage to be gained by a supplier by getting involved. Further it is stressed that there is no formal procurement under way at the moment as the Identity Cards Bill is still before Parliament. Priority for market sounding to date has been given to the smartcard and biometric sectors where the technology is developing quickly, standards are evolving and there is uncertainty about future trends.

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has conducted into the potential benefits of a national identity database for combating *(a)* crime and *(b)* illegal immigration; and if he will make a statement. [203030]

Mr. Browne: A Regulatory Impact Assessment was published at the time of the introduction of the Identity Cards Bill. This set out in detail the potential benefits of the identity cards scheme including the National Identity Register, in combating crime and illegal immigration. This analysis was the result of discussions with key user groups, stakeholders and the consultations that we have undertaken on the principle of identity cards as well as the draft Identity Cards Bill over the past two and a half years.

The identity cards scheme will contribute in the following ways to combating crime: helping to disrupt the support networks of organised criminal operations which rely extensively on the use of multiple identities; encouraging verifiable proof of identity when conducting major financial transactions; providing the capability for law enforcement agencies to be provided with information from the National Identity Register, subject to appropriate authorisation procedures and independent oversight; enabling more efficient use of police resources when dealing with routine identification of individuals with their consent; and checking of fingerprint biometric information at scenes of crime in unsolved cases.

The identity cards scheme will also reduce the illegal immigration "pull factor" by providing a straightforward means to record and verify the immigration status of all residents aged 16 and over. This will allow service providers and employers to make checks more easily without specialised knowledge of immigration rules.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to combat the production of counterfeit identity cards in the event of the introduction of identity cards. [201813]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* The Identity Cards Bill published on 29 November, includes at Clause 27 new offences relating to making or possessing false identity documents such as UK, and foreign, identity cards, passports and driving licences. These offences include not only "false" documents as defined in the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 but also to documents that belong to another person or that have been improperly obtained.

Where it is proved that a person has intent to use these documents, a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment would apply. Where there is no intent, but the accused has no reasonable excuse for having such documentation in his possession, a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment will apply. The introduction of these penalties will ensure that the police are able to take action against those who attempt to produce false identity cards.

In addition, the introduction of a sophisticated identity checking process, coupled with the recording of biometric information which is unique to an individual will counter attempts by a person to obtain more than one identity card under different names.

In its response to the Home Affairs Committee report on Identity Cards (Cm6359), the Government said that it would examine the feasibility of whether the verification service should operate predominantly in an on-line mode. Even if a good quality forged identity card was produced, it would be detected by on-line verification as there would be no associated record held on the National Identity Register against which its validity could be confirmed.

Antisocial Behaviour

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received concerning antisocial behaviour towards homeowners by groups of adolescents under 16 years of age. [205659]

Ms Blears: This is an issue of great concern to residents in many areas.

The Government has provided the tools for police and local councils to effectively tackle antisocial behaviour no matter where people live. Many enforcement powers, for example Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Dispersal Orders and Antisocial Behaviour Orders, are available, regardless of the perpetrator's or the victims housing status.

Airguns

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to bring forward proposals *(a)* to make the sale of all types of airguns to under-18s illegal and *(b)* to license the general sale of airguns. [204820]

Caroline Flint: Our consultation paper on control of firearms explained the range of controls on the sale and use of air weapons, and the changes we have made to the age at which young people may possess or use an air weapon without adult supervision, and to their possession in a public place without reasonable excuse. Respondents were asked to say whether they agreed or not that further restrictions would be disproportionate. We received a large number of responses on this and other questions; these are being carefully considered.

Burgled Householders (Prosecutions)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convicted burglars have successfully sued householders whose houses they have attempted to burgle following incidents occurring during the break in, in *(a)* the last year, *(b)* the last three years, *(c)* the last five years and *(d)* the last 10 years. [204529]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is not available centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost to the Department.

Class A Drugs

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average sentence was in each of the last six years for people charged with supplying Class A drugs to children. [204778]

Caroline Flint: Figures on the average sentence for people charged with supplying Class A drugs to children are not collated. However we do have data on the average sentence for people sentenced to immediate custody for unlawful supply by principal drug offence.

This information, which can be accessed via the Research Development and Statistics website, can be found in the Home Office Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics Supplementary Tables publications as follows:

Year	*Source*	*Location*
1997	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/899supps.pdf	Tables S2.6
1998	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb300supps.pdf	Tables S2.6
1999	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb501supp.pdf	Tables S2.6
2000	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb402supp.pdf	Tables S2.6
2001 and 2002	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb0804supp.pdf	Tables S2.6a and S2.6b

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were arrested for dealing in Class A drugs in each of the last six years. [204780]

Caroline Flint: Figures for the number of people arrested for dealing is not collated for total Class A drugs. However, we do have figures for the total number of people arrested for dealing for the main Class A drug type. These are taken from newly constructed tables and data is therefore only available for 2001 and 2002.

This information can be found in Table 3.6 on page 101 of the Home Office Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics which can be accessed via the RDS website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb0804.pdf

Correspondence

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the question from the hon. Member for Cotswold, tabled on 29 November, ref 201515, regarding applicants for British citizenship serving abroad in the United Kingdom armed forces. [205334]

Mr. Browne: I replied to the hon. Member on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1163W.

Cycling

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cyclists have been charged in Greater London for riding bicycles during the hours of darkness with no visible lighting being displayed in the last period for which figures are available. [203634]

Caroline Flint: Charges may not lead to proceedings. Statistics of defendants charged with crimes are not collected centrally.

In 2003, one cyclist was proceeded against at magistrates courts in Greater London for lighting and reflector offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 Sec 81 and Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989.

Statistics on numbers proceeded against for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Demography

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the number of people who *(a)* move home and *(b)* get married in a year. [203514]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

Using data from the Survey of English Housing, it is estimated that in 2003–04 there were 2,630,000 moves by households in England.

The provisional figure for the number of marriages in England is 242,000 in 2002, which is the latest estimate provided by the Office for National Statistics. An estimate for 2003 will be published in the summer of 2005.

HGV Drivers

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have to bring forward proposals to include heavy goods vehicle drivers as a shortage occupation for the purposes of work permit arrangements; and if he will make a statement. [202111]

Mr. Browne: There are no plans to include heavy goods vehicle drivers as a shortage occupation. Such posts do not normally meet the criteria of the work permit arrangements.

Immigration

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are waiting for decisions on their applications for permanent leave to remain in the United Kingdom. [205656]

Mr. Browne: Currently, management information shows we have approximately 19,000 applications for indefinite leave to remain awaiting consideration in General Group, Managed Migration. In addition, there are further cases where we are considering enforcement action.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his letter of 15 September to the hon. Member for Banbury, if his Department will confirm the immigration status of Amer Ali. [202573]

Mr. Browne: A decision on Mr. All's immigration status has been made and a letter confirming the outcome was sent to him on 3 December care of his legal representatives.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many children are being held in detention solely under Immigration Act powers; and how many of these have been held for more than 28 days in each removal centre; [202684]

(2) how many children have been held in detention solely under Immigration Act powers since his announcement that children will not be detained for more than 28 days without ministerial consent; and how many of these have been held for more than 28 days in each removal centre. [202685]

Mr. Browne: Information on the total number of children detained under Immigration Act powers since the announcement in October 2003 that children will not be detained for more than 28 days without ministerial consent is not available.

On 25 September 2004, 40 children were detained solely under Immigration Act powers. 79 per cent. had been in detention for 28 days or less and the remainder had been detained for less than four months. Of all those children detained, 30 were held at Oakington Reception Centre and five at Tinsley House. The remaining cases were either age dispute cases held at other Immigration Removal centres while their age assessments were being carried out, or young children held at mother and baby units in prisons with their mother while awaiting removal. Further details of these cases (less than three in total) cannot be disclosed due to National Statistics protocols on confidentiality.

Children and infants are detained as part of family groups, usually just prior to their removal and often for a very few days.

Information on the number of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers as at 25 December 2004 will be published on the Home Office website in February 2005.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Immigration Control (Domestic Violence)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will change the immigration and benefits rules to exempt victims of domestic violence subject to immigration control from the no recourse to public funds provision. [199969]

Mr. Browne: Persons still subject to immigration control are excluded from access to public funds under section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and we do not feel that it would be appropriate to make an exception for this particular group. It could lead to people making fraudulent applications, which would not benefit the real victims of domestic violence.

However, we are providing the means by which victims attempting to leave a violent relationship can get access to refuge accommodation. This year we have given a total of £80,000 to Women's Aid towards their last resort fund. Refuges can apply for financial support from the fund to cover the rent and living expenses of women who are making an application for indefinite leave to remain because of domestic violence.

Information Misuse

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of misuse of computer information and databases by *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* police officers and *(c)* immigration officials have been recorded by his Department in each year since 1997. [205353]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Negligent Driving (New Offence)

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward proposals to introduce an offence of causing death by negligent driving. [205640]

Paul Goggins: We have commissioned a review of road traffic offences to cover all levels of bad driving. It is largely complete but there are a number of issues which require further careful consideration before a consultation paper can be published. We intend to publish the consultation paper shortly.

North Yorishire Police

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on funding for North Yorkshire Police for 2005–06. [205652]

Ms Blears: I announced details of the provisional police funding settlement for next year on 2 December. North Yorkshire Police Authority will receive general grants totalling £75.4 million, an increase of £2.7 million or 3.75 per cent. over 2004–05. Because of the grant floor, the authority receives £2.9 million than it otherwise would. In addition to general grants, North Yorkshire will receive around £6.2 million in specific grants for targeted programmes.

Passports

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of the *(a)* adult and *(b)* total population of the UK held a passport in each of the last 20 years. [202193]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The table indicates within a range *(a)* the percentage of the adult population aged 16 and over and *(b)* the percentage of the total population of the UK that held a valid passport in each of the last 20 years.

Percentage

	(a) Adult population holding passports	*(b) Total UK population holding passports*
2003	72–84	69–79
2002	70–82	66–76
2001	68–80	62–72
2000	65–77	59–68
1999	64–76	55–65
1998	62–73	52–61
1997	58–68	49–57
1996	53–63	45–52
1995	48–57	40–47
1994	44–52	37–43
1993	41–48	34–40
1992	—	32–37
1991	—	31–36
1990	—	30–35
1989	—	29–34
1988	—	28–32
1987	—	27–31
1986	—	25–29
1985	—	24–28
1984	—	23–26

The upper end of the range represents the total number of UK passport issues. The lower end of the range represents the minimum number of people holding passports, allowing for the fact that throughout the life of a 10-year adult passport, and 5-year child passport, a certain number of passports will have been replaced before their validity expired (for example to replace lost and stolen passports or to change details on passports). The actual percentage of adult/total population holding a passport therefore lies within these two limits. Prior to 1993 the UKPS only has figures for total passport issues.

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the proportion of pensioners who own a passport. [203024]

Mr. Browne: The UK Passport Service estimates that between 50.5 per cent. and 59.5 per cent. of pensioners own a valid passport.

Drugs

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average sentence in each of the last six years was for people charged with supplying Class A drugs. [204779]

Caroline Flint: Figures on the average sentence length for people charged with supplying Class A drugs only are not collated. However, we do have data on the average sentence length for people charged with supplying all drugs and average sentence length for people charged for drug offences by type of drug. This information, which can be accessed via the Research Development and Statistics website, can be found in the Home Office Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics Supplementary Tables publications as follows:

Year	*Source*	*Location*
1997	http://www.homeofice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/899supps.pdf	Tables S2.6 and S2.12
1998	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb300supps.pdf	Tables S2.6 and S2.12
1999	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb501supp.pdf	Tables S2.6 and S2.12
2000	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb402supp.pdf	Tables S2.6 and S2.12
2001 and 2002	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb0804supp.pdf	Tables S2.6a, S2.6b and S2.12a, S2.12b

This data is only available online for the last five years.

Port Security

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many weapons have been seized at ports of entry to the United Kingdom in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* type of weapon and *(b)* location of seizure. [203530]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The table shows the number of weapons seized by HM Customs and Excise each year since 1996–97. The figures include all weapons within the definition of a firearm in the Firearms Act 1968 but exclude parts of

firearms. Offensive weapons include knives, knuckledusters, swordsticks, and certain martial arts weapons. Customs have central records of offensive weapons seizures only for 2001–02 and 2003–04.

Financial Year	*Rifles and handguns*	*Shotguns*	*Self defence sprays*	*Stun guns*	*Offensive Weapons*
1996–97	532	32	3,452	120	Not available
1997–98	507	362	4,248	344	Not available
1998–99	189	51	2,343	106	Not available
1999–00	512	129	1,169	101	Not available
2000–01	211	44	2,428	114	Not available
2001–02	415	219	1,237	144	2,045
2002–03	228	36	866	255	Not available
2003–04	285	8	609	672	2,999

A breakdown by location is not available. However, Customs' own analysis of the calendar years 2002 and 2003 has identified the following ports of entry where complete firearms (other than shotguns and parts) were seized:

Aberdeen Airport
Avonmouth
Belfast International Airport
Birmingham Airport
Bristol Airport
Brize Norton
Coventry International Hub
Coquelles
Dover
Edinburgh Airport
East Midlands Airport
Falmouth
Felixstowe
Glasgow Airport
Harwich
Hull
Immingham
Kings Lynn
Gatwick Airport
Heathrow Airport
Liverpool Docks
Lyneham
Medway
Manchester Letter Office of Exchange
Mount Pleasant
Newcastle Airport
Plymouth
Poole
Portsmouth
RAF Leeming
Ramsgate
Southampton
Stansted Airport
Tilbury

Press Releases

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press releases have been issued by his Department in each month of 2004; and if he will make a statement. [199906]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of press releases, including regional and local press releases, issued by month are as follows:

Press release breakdown 2004[1]

	Home Office	*Prison Service*	*Her Majesty's Inspectorate of: Prisons/ Probation/Constabulary*
January	46	1	6
February	47	0	4
March	52	0	11
April	23	3	9
May	30	2	5
June	18	[2]21	9
July	51	2	13
August	9	9	8
September	27	0	8
October	31	0	8
November	31	2	1

[1] To 25 November.
[2] Separate regional press notices were sent out to announce nominations for prison officer of the year.

Sentencing Guidelines

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on altering sentencing guidelines for murder. [205653]

Mr. Clarke: Sentencing guidelines are a matter for the independent Sentencing Guidelines Council. Schedule 21 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 sets out robust principles to which judges must have regard when setting the minimum custodial term to be served by the offender within the mandatory life sentence.

The revised guideline published on 16 December 2004 makes a separate provision for murder which rules out any reduction in the most heinous (whole life tariff) cases, halves the maximum reduction available in other cases and emphasises that the tariff as a whole must accurately reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203501]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997. [203926]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mr. Miliband) on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203968]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mr. Miliband) on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204290]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Ruth Kelly) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204310]

Mr. Charles Clarke: No special advisers from this Department have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997.

Vicious and Sex Offenders' Register

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made on rolling out the Vicious and Sex Offenders' Register. [205654]

Paul Goggins: The roll out of ViSOR is progressing well and will be available to all 43 Police Forces in England and Wales by 31 March 2005.

Access to the system will subsequently be extended to the National Probation Service and the Prison Service in order to ensure effective risk assessment and enhance public protection arrangements.

Young Offenders

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long it took on average in the last year for which figures are available from arrest to bringing a young offender before courts in the Metropolitan Police Authority area. [206200]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

Information on the time taken for criminal proceedings in magistrates courts is collected by my Department in its quarterly Time Intervals Survey.

In 2003, the average number of days from arrest to first listing for youth defendants in all criminal cases was 22 days in the Metropolitan Police Force Area. For the year up to September 2004 (the latest survey published) the average was 24 days.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 21 December 2004

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Leader of the House how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205854]

Mr. Hain: This information is collected periodically by the Privy Council Office, which provides Human Resource services to my Office. The provision of personal information on disability is optional and would be held on individual staff files.

Owing to the nature and size of Office, providing this information could result in the identification of individuals.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Leader of the House how many women there are in senior positions among his staff. [205855]

Mr. Hain: The Privy Council Office provides administrative support to my office. I have one senior civil servant on my immediate staff, who is male.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abandoned Vehicles (Morecambe Bay)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Environment Agency has responsibility for the removal of abandoned vehicles on the sands of Morecambe Bay. [206046]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency have a number of powers to deal with pollution and waste on land and controlled waters but are not under a duty use them, or to remove abandoned cars from the Morecombe bay sands.

In this case it would be for the interested parties (local authority, Environment Agency, Maritime and Coastguard Agency etc) to come to a partnership agreement on removal and enforcement action.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the provisional estimates for UK carbon dioxide emissions for the first six months of 2004 are. [205247]

Mr. Morley: The Government does not make provisional estimates of greenhouse gas emissions for periods of less than one year. Estimates for the whole of 2004 will be available in the March 2005 edition of "Energy Trends', which is published by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Climate Change

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out the areas of *(a)* scientific uncertainty associated with manmade climate change and *(b)* renewable and energy-efficient technologies, that she intends to present at the G8 as needing further international collective work. [204911]

Mr. Morley: In February 2005 we will host a conference to explore the consequences of different levels of climate change, from a science perspective, in terms of impacts for different sectors and regions, as well as the for the world as a whole. It will also consider technological options to meet different stabilisation levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The conference will lay the foundation of our current understanding of the science by presenting the current state of play of all scientific issues related to the stabilisation of greenhouse gases. It will provide the scientific evidence of the scale of the threat and demonstrate the urgent need to tackle climate change.

Work on renewable and energy-efficient technologies will be taken forward through a workshop hosted by the new UK Energy Research Centre. We will be inviting researchers from the G8 countries along with representatives from key developing countries with growing energy needs. The meeting will foster closer international cooperation on a number of areas including energy supply, demand management, and new and renewable energies such as biomass, hydrogen and solar PV.

Community Energy Programme

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Community Energy Programme will be extended beyond April 2005. [201121]

Mr. Morley: I am pleased to confirm that we have secured the future of the Community Energy programme for at least the next three years, to March 2008, with additional funding of £10 million available once the original allocation of £50 million is exhausted. This is very good news and underlines this Government's commitment to our Climate Change Programme and our target of eliminating fuel poverty by 2016.

Environment Direct

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when Environment Direct is to be launched; whether it will be inter-active; and whether it will have facilities to demonstrate the need for local environmental change. [204894]

Mr. Morley: We announced our intention to develop a new service called Environment Direct in "Delivering the Essentials of Life", Defra's five-year strategy published on 8 December 2004.

We believe that there is a need for an on-line, searchable service that will give people and communities the straight facts about the effects that different consumption choices can have. We will be consulting on

the detail of the service, including how it will work and what information it will hold. If there is broad agreement, we hope to have Environment Direct in operation from 2006.

Farm Incomes

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the total figure for total income from farming for the most recent year is expected; and if she will make a statement on the level of accuracy of the initial forecast figure in relation to the final agreed figure in previous years. [206011]

Alun Michael: The forecast of UK Total Income From Farming in 2004 was published on 30 November 2004. The provisional estimate will be published on 27 January 2005.

The following table provides details of the level of revision between the initial forecast figure and subsequent provisional estimate for the last five years.

Revisions to initial forecasts of total income from farming

£ billion

	Current prices		
	Forecast	*Provisional*[1]	*Revision*
1999	2.25	2.34	0.09
2000	1.71	1.88	0.17
2001	1.80	1.71	-0.09
2002	2.27	2.36	0.09
2003	3.23	3.20	-0.03

[1] Provisional estimates can be further revised in subsequent years as additional data becomes available and as a consequence of any methodological improvements.

Farm Waste

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will break down by cost area the estimated cost of future disposal of on-farm waste. [205496]

Mr. Morley: On 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 106WS, I announced that the Government had published for consultation the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005. One of the main purposes of the draft Regulations is to repeal the current exclusion in section 75(7)*(c)* of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and to apply to agricultural waste the national controls that are already in place to comply with the waste framework directive and the landfill directive. The consultation paper is available in the Library of the House and on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/agwaste-regs/index.htm. A Regulatory Impact Assessment, estimating the cost of applying the directives' controls to agricultural waste, is provided in paragraph 3.31 of and Annex I to the consultation paper.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce further controls on open burning of farm waste. [205497]

Mr. Morley: On 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 106WS, I announced that the Government had published for consultation the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005. One of the main purposes of the draft Regulations is to repeal the current exclusion in section 75(7)*(c)* of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and to apply to agricultural waste the national controls that are already in place to comply with the waste framework directive and the landfill directive. The consultation paper is available in the Library of the House and on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/agwaste-regs/index.htm. The effect of the draft Regulations will be to preclude the open burning of agricultural waste other than small quantities of "plant tissue" under the terms of a licensing exemption registered with the Environment Agency.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Fuel Poverty Implementation Plan will be published. [204276]

Mr. Morley: We published "Fuel Poverty in England": The Government's Plan for Action' on 30 November 2004.

Copies are available in the Library of the House.

Home Energy Efficiency

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households have been assisted by the Home Energy Efficiency and Warm Front schemes in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne since 1 April 1997; and what the average size of grant was in each financial year. [204403]

Mr. Morley: Since the beginning of Warm Front in June 2000, approximately 2,100 households have been assisted in the constituency of Newcastle upon Tyne, Central.

Under the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme information was not collected at constituency level. However it is estimated that from April 1997 to May 2000 around 5,000 households in Newcastle upon Tyne, Central were assisted by the scheme.

Information on average grants awarded prior to 2000 is not available. From June 2000, the average Warm Front grant awarded in Newcastle upon Tyne, Central was:

	Approximate average grant (£)
2000–01	330
2001–02	390
2002–03	435
2003–04	580
2004–05 (to date)	940

Animal Welfare

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to support an eight-hour limit on live animal transport at EU level; if it will advance this point of view when the issue next comes before the Agriculture Council; if the Government will use their

presidency of the European Union next year to promote an eight-hour limit if no earlier agreement has been reached; and if she will make a statement. [200348]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have consistently said that we prefer a trade in meat to the long distance transport of animals, and we would prefer that journey times were reduced. However at present there is no qualified majority among EU member states in favour of this and we see no prospect of the balance of opinion in the Council on journey times changing significantly in the near future.

At the November 2004 Agriculture Council, EU Ministers reached political agreement on new rules for animal transport. They will improve enforcement of the rules, introduce new training and authorisation procedures for transporters and an obligation on the Commission to review the dossier four years after implementation.

The role of the presidency is the effective management of business. It does not give the holder the right of initiative, that remains with the European Commission. We will work closely with the Commission to deliver the inherited agenda and any new proposals brought forward while we hold the presidency.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with her counterpart in the US Administration; and what the outcome of those discussions was. [204896]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's most recent interaction with the US was her visit to New York and Washington from 3–5 May where she met with senior representatives of the Administration to discuss climate change issues.

Although no longer disputing scientific evidence that human activity is causing global warming, the US Administration has yet to take effective action on climate change at either federal or international level. While the US remains opposed to the Kyoto Protocol, ratification by Russia and the entry into force of the protocol is likely to increase the pressure on the Administration to tackle climate change and to take the issue seriously.

It was encouraging to see that action was under way at state level. For example, representatives of nine north-east states outlined their emerging cap-and-trade scheme, and praised the UK for taking a leading role.

The Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is meeting this week in Buenos Aires which will provide a further opportunity for Ministers to speak to representatives from the US.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list her official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans she has to establish a public register of such information. [202396]

Margaret Beckett: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers' public engagements.

Ministerial Visits

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many Ministers from her Department have visited the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last five years; and what the purpose was of each visit. [199668]

Margaret Beckett: Defra was formed in June 2001. Since then there have been no ministerial visits to Wandsworth.

Nuclear Waste Disposal

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what options are being considered for nuclear waste disposal. [205459]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The Government have established the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) to assess the options for the longer term management of higher activity radioactive waste throughout the United Kingdom. The committee is currently preparing a shortlist of potential solutions in consultation with stakeholders. It's report is due to be delivered in July 2006. Further details of CoRWM's work programme can be found at www.corwm.org.uk.

Petrol Storage

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are taken by the Environment Agency or the Petroleum Officer where a risk assessment shows that a storage system at a petrol station poses a significant risk to the environment or human health and no harm reduction has been undertaken by the site operator; and under what circumstances they can take action to close a site. [204627]

Mr. Morley: The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 require that employers reduce the risks from dangerous substances as far as is reasonably practicable. If the site is still being used as a filling station, and a Petroleum Officer believes the risk of a leak from the underground tanks is unacceptable, powers are available in Section 21 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to issue an improvement or prohibition notice. If the site is no longer being used as a filling station, the provisions of Section 73 of the Public Health Act 1961, or in Scotland, Section 94 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 allow the Petroleum Licensing Authority (PLA) to instruct the site owner to make the tanks permanently

safe. If the site has been abandoned and the owner cannot be traced or contacted then the PLA can use further provisions in the legislation to make the site safe.

Under Regulation 19 of the Groundwater Regulations the Environment Agency may prohibit, or place conditions upon, storage at the petrol station where it considers there to be an unacceptable risk to groundwater. Under the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Anti-Pollution (Works) Regulations 1999 the Environment Agency may require any environmental damage to be remediated, or action taken to prevent future pollution. In practice it is likely that the Agency would first discuss the matter with the petrol station owner to seek voluntary agreement on a solution.

Plastics

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce a new plastics recovery programme. [205498]

Mr. Morley: On 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 106WS, I announced that the Government had published for consultation the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005. One of the main purposes of the draft Regulations is to repeal the current exclusion in section 75(7)*(c)* of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and to apply to agricultural waste the national controls that are already in place to comply with the waste framework directive and the landfill directive. The consultation paper is available in the Library of the House and on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/agwaste-regs/index.htm.

Chapter 8 of the consultation paper discusses the introduction of a voluntary or statutory producer responsibility scheme for the collection and recovery of non-packaging plastic waste from farms. Views are invited by 18 March 2005. Plastic packaging waste from farms and elsewhere is already the subject of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended).

Pollution

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what contribution motor vehicles have made to carbon dioxide emissions in each decade since 1974; and what her estimates are for the next three decades. [204895]

Mr. Morley: The table below shows total CO_2 emissions from road transport for each decade since 1974. The estimates are calculated from annual road transport CO_2 emission totals, as reported under the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (1990–2002) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (1974–1989). The data are presented as annual averages over each decade to facilitate comparison with the projections data as follows:

	Decade average road transport emissions over each decade (Mt CO_2)/yr
1974–83	73.90
1984–93	100.20
1994–2002[1]	114.94

[1] Averaged over nine years. The UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory covering 2003 emissions has not yet been finalised, but will be published in April 2005.

The second table shows the most recent projected emissions from road transport to 2020, made by the Department of Trade and Industry. These projections include the estimated impact of climate change policy measures, and are subject to the uncertainty inevitably associated with projected data. Comparable projections are not currently available for the period beyond 2020.

	Projected annual road transport emissions (Mt CO_2)/yr[1]
2005	118.80
2010	126.50
2015[2]	133.83
2020[2]	140.06

[1] These figures include emissions from commercial vehicles, and are "measured at source", so do not include the emissions from the refineries associated with the fuel used.
[2] Projections beyond 2010 are more uncertain than pre-2010.

Radioactive Waste Management

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what reports she has received from the Chair of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management on the likelihood of the Committee meeting its reporting deadline. [205514]

Mr. Morley: The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management's programme of work including its final report scheduled for June 2006 was agreed with Ministers in April 2004. The Chair of the Committee, regularly meets with Ministers to discuss progress and presents reports at the end of each phase of its programme. The Committee's Phase 1 report, submitted to Ministers in October 2004, confirmed progress towards this and interim milestones and deliverables set out in its programme. The Chair presented the Committee's first Annual Report to Ministers at the end of November 2004 and offered to appear before any of the UK's Parliaments or Assemblies to explain the Report or the work of the Committee.

Recycling

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many community recycling organisations are registered in the West Midlands. [206086]

Mr. Morley: This information is not held centrally because not all community recycling organisations are required to be registered with the Environment Agency.

Renewable Transport

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has made to *(a)* HM Treasury and *(b)* the Department of Transport on the renewable transport fuel obligation. [205501]

Mr. Morley: The Department has had a number of discussions with the Treasury and the Department for Transport, both at ministerial and official level, about a renewable transport fuel obligation. Defra will continue

to be involved with these Departments and others, such as the Department of Trade and Industry, as the Government takes forward the consultative process and feasibility study on an obligation that was announced in the recent pre-Budget Report.

Road Fuel Storage Regulations

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the regulatory system applying to wetstock controls and underground storage tanks for road fuel has been changed since 1996. [204665]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* The Health and Safety Executive introduced the new the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations in 2002 under which employers are required to reduce the risks from dangerous substances (including petrol) as far as is reasonably practicable. Approved Codes of Practice supporting this new legislation require underground storage tanks to be provided with secondary containment or a leak detection system capable of identifying leaks before a hazardous situation can arise.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how regulators assess the effectiveness of the wetstock controls of road fuel to demonstrate the minimum detectable leak in litres per day; and if she will make a statement. [204666]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* The Health and Safety Executive, together with the local authority coordinators for regulatory services, has issued guidance to Petroleum Licensing Authorities on wetstock management, titled "Leak Detection in Tanks and Pipework." which sets out an approach to assessing controls and is available on the HSE website. The Environment Agency has also produced guidance on wetstock reconciliation, "Wetstock Management for fuel storage sites—an operators guide", which is used by its staff when inspecting filling stations.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment have been undertaken to evaluate the wetstock controls or the underground storage systems for road fuel at petrol stations. [204667]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* Although no formal nationwide assessment of wetstock controls has been undertaken, they will be taken into account in a study which Defra has recently commissioned into the risks to groundwater posed by petrol stations. In addition, regular meetings take place of the Petrol Enforcement Liaison Group to consider safety issues within the industry. The group includes representatives of the Health and Safety Executive, the local authority coordinators for regulatory services, the Petroleum Licensing Authorities and petrol station owners and operators, and has recently been extended to include a representative from the Environment Agency.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Environment Agency maintains a national database to quantify the size and number of leaks from petrol filling stations and their impact on the environment. [204668]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* The Environment Agency maintains a national database which records the number of pollution incidents occurring at petrol stations by region. It further distinguishes incidents relating to the spillage or loss of petrol, and between major, significant and minor incidents. Such data includes leaks and spills from underground tanks and other sources of fuel loss.

Single Farm Payments

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* role and *(b)* impact of the profit pasturage agreements between landlords and users in respect of Single Farm Payment entitlements. [204579]

Alun Michael: Discussions with stakeholders have confirmed the wide range of different types of tenure agreement that operate in the industry. Whereas we are happy to discuss in broad terms where we see each fitting in to the Single Payment Scheme operational requirements, we have not sought to determine in detail the impact of each commercial arrangement.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203911]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203970]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W.

Waste

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much liquid hazardous waste was sent to in-house landfill sites in *(a)* 1998, *(b)* 1999 and *(c)* 2000; and where and how such liquid hazardous waste is now being treated. [203661]

Mr. Morley: Data on liquid hazardous waste sent to in-house landfills are not available.

Since July 2002, the disposal of hazardous liquid waste to any landfill has been banned. Alternative treatments to landfill will be provided at suitably authorised sites. The typical treatments for hazardous liquid wastes will include physico-chemical treatment and biological treatment processes. These use techniques such as precipitation, coagulation and filtration with subsequent dewatering of sludges and disposal of treated non-hazardous liquids to sewer with appropriate discharge consents.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Agricultural Waste Regulations will be introduced. [206783]

Mr. Morley: On 9 December I announced that the Government had published for consultation the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 ("the Agricultural Waste Regulations"), *Official*

Report, column 106WS. The consultation paper is available in the Library of the House and on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/agwaste-regs/index.htm. The timetable is set out in paragraph 1.7 of the consultation paper and envisages the regulations coming into force from June 2005.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Abandoned Vehicles

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what plans he has to review the legislation concerning the time police must wait until abandoned vehicles can be removed from public roads; [202200]

(2) what plans he has to review the legislation concerning the time period where police must wait until abandoned vehicles can be removed from public roads. [206055]

Mr. Spellar: Articles 47 and 48 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (the 1997 Order) makes provision for a constable to remove, or require the removal of an abandoned vehicle from a road. There is no statutory requirement in the 1997 Order requiring a constable to wait for any period before exercising the powers in Article 48, except where it is considered that the vehicle is in such a condition that it ought to be destroyed. In such circumstances, seven days notice is required to be given.

It should be noted, however, that in addition to the powers to remove abandoned vehicles, Articles 47 and 48 also make provision for a constable to remove a vehicle causing obstruction to persons using the road or likely to cause danger to such persons. In such circumstances a constable may remove the vehicle to another position on that or another road or to a place which is not a road. No notice is required to be given and the constable may remove the vehicle immediately.

Roads Service currently has no plans to review the existing legislation, nor has it been approached by PSNI to do so.

Care Packages

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients in the Province avail of the direct payments scheme for care packages; and if he will make a statement. [206182]

Angela Smith: At 30 September 2004, there were 192 persons availing of the direct payments scheme for care packages. Of these, 168 were in receipt of payments for care managed domiciliary packages, and 24 were in receipt of payments for non-care managed packages.

Direct payments increase choice and promote independence. The Carers and Direct Payments Act (NI) 2002 recently extended their availability and the Department is working with the Health and Personal Social Services to improve their uptake across Northern Ireland.

Chiropody

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients *(a)* are awaiting and *(b)* have received in the last 12 months an initial assessment for chiropody services in each trust in the Province. [206123]

Angela Smith: Information on number of patients awaiting initial assessment for chiropody services is not collected centrally. However, information is available on the number of persons who attended their first appointment with a community podiatrist/chiropodist, according to time waited for appointment. This information is shown according to Health and Social Services Trust in the following table, in respect of the year ending 30 September 2004.

	Time waited for appointment			
Trust	*Under 3 months*	*3-6 months*	*6 months and over*	*Total persons attending*
Belfast City Hospital	1,133	0	0	1,133
Down Lisburn	1,182	201	79	1,462
North and West Belfast	1,460	378	131	1,969
South and East Belfast	893	293	711	1,897
Ulster	2,149	424	226	2,799
Causeway	1,148	219	87	1,454
Homefirst	3,818	571	905	5,294
Armagh and Dungannon	758	161	309	1,228
Craigavon and Banbridge	653	61	42	756
Newry and Mourne	330	179	17	526
Foyle	1,223	615	458	2,296
Sperrin Lakeland	4,016	720	110	4,846
Northern Ireland	18,763	3,822	3,075	25,660

Civil Service Jobs

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Civil Service jobs have been relocated from the Greater Belfast area to each of the 12 constituencies in Northern Ireland, excluding North Down, Foyle and the four Belfast constituencies, in each of the last five years. [206057]

Mr. Pearson: None.

General Medical Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the exceptional circumstances clause in the new Northern Ireland general medical services contract and the potential for doctors to be obliged to provide out-of-hours cover. [206181]

Angela Smith: The legislation relating to the new GMS contract contains a provision requiring any Health and Social Services Board which, despite using its reasonable endeavours, has failed to find an alternative provider to take on the provision of out-of-hours services, to make an application to the Department for approval to refuse the request to opt out of the provision of such services or to delay the effective date of commencement of the opt out. In the interests of securing appropriate provision for patients in such circumstances, the existing out-of-hours provider would be obliged to continue to provide these services. It is

anticipated that such applications will be extremely rare and, to date, none has been received in Northern Ireland.

Genito-Urinary Medicine

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce targets for waiting times from referral to assessment in genito-urinary medicine. [205991]

Angela Smith: Although there has been some slight increases in waiting times from the previous walk in arrangements, at present there are no plans to introduce targets for waiting times in the genito-urinary medicine service. The Department has conducted a comprehensive review of sexual health services, which included a consultation exercise, and work will be undertaken to examine the way in which the service is delivered with a view to improving access in a local setting.

Hospital Consultants

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure that *(a)* leading hospital consultants are attracted to work and *(b)* approved training of junior doctors occurs at hospitals in the south-west of the Province. [205967]

Angela Smith: Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust is currently bringing forward plans for modernising service delivery through the implementation of "Delivering Better Services". In keeping with this modernisation programme opportunities are being taken to create more attractive jobs for consultants through engagement in Clinical Networks.

The Trust, in common with other HSS Trusts, is engaged in the modernising medical career programme, which will provide competency based postgraduate training for doctors. It is currently developing a range of potential placements in acute specialties, which will be quality assured by the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency.

Nursing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will increase flexibility within nursing training to make it easier to convert from one nursing discipline to another. [206124]

Angela Smith: The Department monitors the levels of training required to deliver patient care and identified shortfalls are addressed through its pre-registration and post registration-commissioning plans.

Sexual Offences

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when there will be a review of sexual offences; and what areas this review will cover. [206329]

Mr. Spellar: I have instructed officials to consider legislative measures to address concerns expressed about the law on sexual offences, particularly in relation to offences against children and vulnerable people. However, it is too early at this stage to know the range of issues likely to be covered in any proposed legislative change. I plan to have draft legislation published for consultation next year and brought forward when the parliamentary timetable permits.

Smoking

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate his Department has made of the number of patients who commence smoking while in psychiatric hospitals. [205959]

Angela Smith: The number of patients who commence smoking while in psychiatric hospitals is not measured.

Special Needs Assistants

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the average starting salary is for those qualified to assist children with speech and learning difficulties in Northern Ireland; and what Board areas have the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest levels of pay scale; [202199]

(2) what the average starting salary is for those qualified to assist children with speech and learning difficulties in Northern Ireland; and what board areas have the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest levels of pay scale. [206054]

Angela Smith: The average starting salary for those qualified to assist children with speech and learning difficulties is as follows: Speech and Language Therapists £19,413, Speech and Language Therapists' Assistants £11,195 and Technical Instructors £15,105. The Eastern Board area has the highest starting salary and the Southern Board area has the lowest starting salary for Speech and Language Therapists. Technical Instructors and Speech and Language Therapists' assistants are paid at the same starting salary across the four Board areas.

Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his assessment is of the impact on service provision of the budgetary overspend by the Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust in the most recent financial year. [205968]

Angela Smith: Sperrin Lakeland Trust has assured the Department that it should met its statutory requirement to remain within budget, and that its budget profile for the rest of the 2004–05 financial year will not impact directly on the health care services provided by the Trust within the resources allocated.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Crime

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of this summer's campaign on alcohol-related anti-social behaviour on public services, with particular reference to *(a)* police and *(b)* ambulances. [201596]

Ms Blears: The summer Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign ran over eight weekends in July and August 2004. The campaign saw concerted activity by police and partners to tackle alcohol-related violence and disorder and target those who encourage underage and binge drinking. It formed part of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, which was published on 15 July 2004.

In the 92 Basic Command Units that took part in the summer campaign, there was a slight increase in the number of lower level harassment and violent incidents recorded due to more proactive policing through enhanced enforcement activities. However, there was a 9 per cent. fall in more serious violent crime in the participating areas when compared with a one per cent. increase in the areas that did not take part. Data to demonstrate the impact on Ambulance Trusts was not captured centrally.

The effectiveness of the campaign was also measured by feedback from participating Basic Command Units and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partners. This has been captured in a "Lessons Learned" document that has been circulated to all BCUs and CDRPs. These lessons will be employed as part of the forthcoming Christmas campaign that will run from 17 December 2004 to 3 January 2005.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many housing-related antisocial behaviour incidents have been reported in each of the last seven years. [204535]

Ms Blears: In October 2004, the Home Office published an on-line report entitled "Perceptions and experience of antisocial behaviour: findings from the 2003/2004 British Crime Survey" (HO Online Report 49/04). The report shows that houses and flats were the perceived target in nine per cent of the most recent instances of vandalism or graffiti in the last 12 months (the only period for which this information is available). A copy of this report is available on the Home Office website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/rdsolr4904.pdf

The statistics available from the recorded crime series relate to recorded offences of criminal damage to a dwelling and racially aggravated criminal damage to a dwelling. Statistics are only available from 1998–99.

Table 1: Recorded offences of criminal damage to a dwelling in England and Wales—1998–99 to 2001–02

Period	Criminal damage to a dwelling	Racially aggravated criminal damage to a dwelling	Total
1998–99	216,590	n/a	216,590
1999–2000	234,575	1,452	236,027
2000–01	238,896	1,765	240,661
2001–02	269,456	2228	271,684

Note:
1. The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.
n/a = not available

Table 2: Recorded offences of criminal damage to a dwelling in England and Wales—2002–03 and 2003–04

Period	Criminal damage to a dwelling	Racially aggravated criminal damage to a dwelling	Total
2002–03	291,999	2,044	294,043
2003–04	321,613	1,981	323,594

Note:
1. The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to place acceptable behaviour contracts on a statutory basis. [204538]

Ms Blears: There are a number of intervention and enforcement tools available for tackling antisocial behaviour. The action taken should reflect the nature of the antisocial behaviour and the impact it has had on the community. The use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and other early interventions are crucial as they show communities, and potential perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, that action will be taken against those who behave in an antisocial manner.

ABCs were first pioneered by the London borough of Islington with the Metropolitan police. Their successful model was then promoted by the Home Office and adopted across the rest of the country. They are voluntary agreements between a person who has been involved in antisocial behaviour and one or more local agencies. They are not statutory orders and we currently have no plans to place ABCs on a statutory basis.

However, ABCs play an important role in early intervention to tackle antisocial behaviour and the Home Office, Youth Justice Board and Association of Chief Police Officers did produce guidance on them in November 2002.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* successfully obtained by local authorities, broken down by local authority area. [204851]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 data for antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) were collected by police force area on aggregate numbers only. From 1 June 2000 copies of the orders were collected from the courts. From these copies we are able to determine the type of applicant. The number of ASBOs applied for during the period from 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004 (latest available), as notified to the Home Office, where the main complainant was a local government authority, are given in the table by result.

The number of antisocial behaviour orders applied for by local government authorities at the magistrates court and the county court, as notified to the Home Office, by result, 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004

Name of applicant	*Area*	*Number of applications*	*Number issued*	*Number refused*
Bath and N.E. Somerset Council	Avon and Somerset	4	4	—
Bristol City Council	Avon and Somerset	20	20	—
Somerset County Council	Avon and Somerset	2	2	—
South Gloucestershire District Council	Avon and Somerset	1	1	—
South Somerset District Council	Avon and Somerset	1	1	—
Luton Borough Council	Bedfordshire	6	6	—
Huntingdonshire District Council	Cambridgeshire	2	2	—
Peterborough Council	Cambridgeshire	14	14	—
Chester City Council	Cheshire	1	1	—
Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council	Cheshire	2	2	—
Halton Borough Council	Cheshire	1	1	—
Middlesbrough Borough Council	Cleveland	16	16	—
Redcar and Cleveland Council	Cleveland	1	—	1
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	Cleveland	2	2	—
Allerdale Borough Council	Cumbria	3	3	—
Carlisle City Council	Cumbria	1	1	—
Caradon District Council	Devon and Cornwall	2	2	—
North Devon District Council	Devon and Cornwall	1	1	—
Plymouth City Council	Devon and Cornwall	9	9	—
Bournemouth Borough Council	Dorset	1	1	—
Christchurch Borough Council	Dorset	1	1	—
Poole Borough Council	Dorset	7	7	—
Purbeck District Council	Dorset	5	5	—
Derwentside District Council	Durham	8	8	—
Sedgefield Borough Council	Durham	3	3	—
Wear Valley District Council	Durham	1	1	—
Carmarthenshire County Council	Dyfed Powys	1	1	—
Harlow District Council	Essex	1	1	—
Thurrock District Council	Essex	1	1	—
Cheltenham Borough Council	Gloucestershire	7	7	—
Forest of Dean District Council	Gloucestershire	1	1	—
Stroud District Council	Gloucestershire	2	2	—
London Borough of Barnet	Greater London	3	3	—
London Borough of Bexley	Greater London	11	11	—
London Borough of Brent	Greater London	9	8	1
London Borough of Bromley	Greater London	6	6	—
London Borough of Camden	Greater London	37	37	—
London Borough of Croydon	Greater London	7	7	—
London Borough of Enfield	Greater London	2	2	—
London Borough of Greenwich	Greater London	6	6	—
London Borough of Hackney	Greater London	2	2	—
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Greater London	3	3	—
London Borough of Islington	Greater London	1	1	—
London Borough of Lambeth	Greater London	1	1	—
London Borough of Lewisham	Greater London	4	4	—
London Borough of Merton	Greater London	1	1	—
London Borough of Newham	Greater London	1	1	—
London Borough of Southwark	Greater London	4	4	—
London Borough of Sutton	Greater London	3	3	—
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Greater London	3	3	—
London Borough of Wandsworth	Greater London	1	1	—
London Borough of Westminster	Greater London	4	3	1
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Greater London	1	1	—
Bolton Met Borough Council	Greater Manchester	9	9	—
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	Greater Manchester	1	1	—
Manchester City Council	Greater Manchester	172	168	4
Oldham Met. Borough Council	Greater Manchester	10	10	—
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Greater Manchester	19	19	—
Salford Metropolitan Borough Council	Greater Manchester	30	30	—
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	Greater Manchester	7	7	—
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	Greater Manchester	3	3	—
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	Greater Manchester	13	13	—
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	Greater Manchester	17	17	—
Caerphilly County Borough Council	Gwent	2	2	—
Cwmbran and E. Gwent Council	Gwent	1	1	—
Newport County Borough Council	Gwent	6	6	—
Torfaen County Borough Council	Gwent	4	4	—
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	Hampshire	1	1	—
Havant Borough Council	Hampshire	3	3	—
Isle of Wight Council	Hampshire	2	2	—
New Forest District Council	Hampshire	1	1	—

The number of antisocial behaviour orders applied for by local government authorities at the magistrates court and the county court, as notified to the Home Office, by result, 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004

Name of applicant	Area	Number of applications	Number issued	Number refused
Portsmouth City Council	Hampshire	21	19	2
Rushmoor Borough Council	Hampshire	1	1	—
Southampton Council	Hampshire	15	15	—
Broxbourne Borough Council	Hertfordshire	6	6	—
Dacorum Borough Council	Hertfordshire	2	2	—
East Hertfordshire District Council	Hertfordshire	1	1	—
North Hertfordshire District Council	Hertfordshire	4	4	—
St. Albans District Council	Hertfordshire	1	1	—
Stevenage Borough Council	Hertfordshire	4	4	—
Three Rivers District Council	Hertfordshire	4	4	—
Watford Borough Council	Hertfordshire	1	1	—
Welwyn Hatfield District Council	Hertfordshire	1	1	—
Kingston-upon-Hull City Council	Humberside	10	10	—
North East Lincolnshire Council	Humberside	1	1	—
Ashford Borough Council	Kent	1	1	—
Canterbury City Council	Kent	6	6	—
Gravesham Borough Council	Kent	1	1	—
Kent County Council	Kent	1	1	—
Medway Council	Kent	8	8	—
Sevenoaks District Council	Kent	1	1	—
Shepway District Council	Kent	1	1	—
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Kent	2	2	—
Burnley Borough Council	Lancashire	3	3	—
Fylde Borough Council	Lancashire	1	1	—
Hyndburn Borough Council	Lancashire	3	3	—
Ribble Valley Borough Council	Lancashire	1	1	—
Rossendale Borough Council	Lancashire	7	7	—
West Lancashire District Council	Lancashire	6	6	—
Leicester City Council	Leicestershire	5	5	—
Oadby and Wigston District Council	Leicestershire	1	1	—
North Lincolnshire Council	Lincolnshire	2	2	—
South Kesteven District Council	Lincolnshire	1	1	—
Knowsley Met. Borough Council	Merseyside	3	3	—
Liverpool City Council	Merseyside	46	45	1
Sefton Met. Borough Council	Merseyside	10	10	—
St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	Merseyside	2	2	—
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council	Merseyside	6	6	—
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	Norfolk	11	11	—
King's Lynn and W. Norfolk Borough Council	Norfolk	7	7	—
Norwich City Council	Norfolk	11	10	1
Gwynedd Council	North Wales	1	1	—
Wrexham County Borough Council	North Wales	1	1	—
City of York Council	North Yorkshire	9	9	—
Harrogate Borough Council	North Yorkshire	1	1	—
Selby District Council	North Yorkshire	1	1	—
Corby Borough Council	Northamptonshire	1	1	—
Daventry District Council	Northamptonshire	1	1	—
South Northamptonshire Council	Northamptonshire	1	1	—
Wellingborough Borough Council	Northamptonshire	6	6	—
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	Northumbria	6	6	—
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, City of	Northumbria	4	4	—
Sunderland City Council	Northumbria	2	2	—
Broxtowe Borough Council	Nottinghamshire	4	4	—
Mansfield District Council	Nottinghamshire	3	3	—
Nottingham City Council	Nottinghamshire	13	13	—
Cardiff County Council	South Wales	1	1	—
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	South Wales	4	4	—
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	South Wales	9	9	—
Rhondda Cynon Taff Council	South Wales	1	1	—
Barnsley Met. Borough Council	South Yorkshire	8	8	—
Doncaster Met. Borough Council	South Yorkshire	18	18	—
Rotherham Met. Borough Council	South Yorkshire	2	2	—
Sheffield City Council	South Yorkshire	20	20	—
Cannock Chase District Council	Staffordshire	2	2	—
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	Staffordshire	6	6	—
Stafford Borough Council	Staffordshire	1	1	—
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Staffordshire	8	8	—
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Staffordshire	6	6	—
Tamworth Borough Council	Staffordshire	2	2	—
Babergh District Council	Suffolk	2	2	—
Forest Heath District Council	Suffolk	1	1	—

The number of antisocial behaviour orders applied for by local government authorities at the magistrates court and the county court, as notified to the Home Office, by result, 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004

Name of applicant	*Area*	*Number of applications*	*Number issued*	*Number refused*
Ipswich Borough Council	Suffolk	9	9	—
Waveney District Council	Suffolk	6	6	—
Mole Valley District Council	Surrey	1	1	—
Brighton and Hove City Council	Sussex	25	25	—
Hastings Borough Council	Sussex	7	7	—
Cherwell District Council	Thames Valley	2	1	1
Milton Keynes Borough Council	Thames Valley	7	7	—
Oxford City Council	Thames Valley	2	2	—
Reading Borough Council	Thames Valley	2	2	—
Slough Borough Council	Thames Valley	5	5	—
South Buckinghamshire District Council	Thames Valley	1	1	—
North Warwickshire Borough Council	Warwickshire	1	1	—
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	Warwickshire	5	5	—
Warwickshire County Council	Warwickshire	1	1	—
Bridgnorth District Council	West Mercia	3	3	—
Herefordshire Council	West Mercia	1	1	—
Oswestry Borough Council	West Mercia	2	2	—
Telford and Wrekin Council	West Mercia	2	2	—
Birmingham City Council	West Midlands	14	14	—
Coventry City Council	West Midlands	22	21	1
Dudley Met. Borough Council	West Midlands	10	10	—
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	11	11	—
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	4	4	—
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	27	27	—
Wolverhampton City Council	West Midlands	12	12	—
Bradford City Council	West Yorkshire	18	18	—
Calderdale Met. Borough Council	West Yorkshire	11	11	—
Kirklees Metropolitan Council	West Yorkshire	21	21	—
Leeds City Council	West Yorkshire	143	143	—
Wakefield Met. District Council	West Yorkshire	2	2	—
Swindon Borough Council	Wiltshire	7	7	—
Total		1,287	1,274	13

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Crosby; and how many of those have been violated. [205030]

Ms Blears: The Home Office have been notified of eight antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued, between 1 June 2000 and 30 June 2004 (latest available), where prohibitions have been imposed in the Sefton metropolitan borough council area, in which Crosby is situated.

Data on breaches of ASBOs are collated centrally at Criminal Justice System area level only.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rates of antisocial behaviour, broken down by type, have been in Crosby over the past five years; and what the national levels of each type of incidents was. [205031]

Ms Blears: Data on rates of antisocial behaviour, broken down by type, for Crosby over the past five years is not centrally available.

The Home Office uses the British Crime Survey (BCS) to measure public perceptions of antisocial behaviour nationally. The Home Office antisocial behaviour target to reduce antisocial behaviour is based on a BCS measure of public perceptions of seven types of antisocial behaviour. However, BCS data cannot be broken down to areas smaller than police force areas, and the figures for perceptions of antisocial behaviour are not routinely published at below regional level.

Results from the British Crime Survey are available in Home Office Online Report 49/04 (2004) "Perceptions and experience of antisocial behaviour: findings from the British Crime Survey", by Martin Wood. This report is available on http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action has been taken in Sefton to combat antisocial behaviour. [205032]

Ms Blears: The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 is the single biggest package of measures tackling antisocial behaviour. They were introduced after widespread consultation with communities and practitioners. These powers are part of the Government's Together campaign to help local people and agencies to tackle the menace of yob behaviour. The Act and Together apply across all England and Wales including the hon. Members Constituency.

The Sefton Antisocial Behaviour Unit was set up on 4 October 2004 and comprises of a manager, solicitor, four antisocial behaviour officers and they are also recruiting an additional member of staff. Sefton is fully on board and delivering a varied menu of options in the fight against antisocial behaviour. Listed are activities that have or are taking place to tackle the problem of ASB.

Dispersal Orders

Currently there is a dispersal order on the trains, railway line and stations in the area. There are proposals to introduce a second dispersal order in the Crosby and Waterloo area. Prior to this second order the police have been running an operation for the last six months to disperse the gangs of youths that gather and congregate in the area.

Closure Orders

Following a major police operation, involving drug dealing in the south of the borough, a closure order was obtained following which the persons involved relinquished their tenancy to the premises. The police and council have been working together to bring the house back up to a decent homes standard ready for reoccupation. The police have agreed to allow the council to go to the court and seek a discharge of the order for the premises (Monday 20 December 2004) ready for the premises to be re-let on Tuesday 4 January 2005. The police are now considering other closure orders and will be working closely with the council.

Alcohol Enforcement

Throughout the year Trading Standards Officers have conducted a number of test purchases from off licences in the area, resulting in a number of formal cautions being issued to the licensees. There are more planned in the run up to Christmas as part of the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC). Local police officers are seizing alcohol from youths throughout the area

Fireworks

Sefton has taken part in Operation Good (Buy and Banger along with the "Responsible Retailer Scheme," a multi-agency campaign involving the community, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Merseyside police and Sefton council. The aims and objectives are to

Reduce illegal activity in relation to fireworks, in particular the illegal sale of fireworks

Reduce nuisance and antisocial behaviour

Improve intelligence

Provide reassurance to our communities

Enable all partner agencies to improve satisfaction and confidence in the services they provide

Fixed Penalties

The Police are making full use of fixed penalties for a variety of offences that are antisocial behaviour related. Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) One of the RSLs is currently recruiting a dedicated ASB officer, it is envisaged this person will work alongside Sefton ASB Unit.

Crown Prosecution Service

There are strong working relationships between Sefton antisocial behaviour unit, Merseyside police and the Crown Prosecution Service via their dedicated ASB Prosecutor Iain Criddle.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue

Have recruited five Arson Reduction Officers one for each CDRP Seftons Officer is working within Sefton ASB Unit.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Currently, Sefton has 23 antisocial behaviour orders.

Other Interventions

Full use is being made of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Tenancy Warning Contracts (TWC). There are a variety of responses in that if the person subject of a contract conforms no further action is taken. If they have a minor breach they are warned if it is more serious then the fact that a person has been given a warning will be cited in future court proceedings.

Support Packages

Currently, there is support available from the Youth Offending Team, Connexions and projects such as Restorative Justice, Parenting 2000 and Early Years. Work is currently underway under the Youth Offending Team to formalise what is available as part of the councils (Children Schools and Families) Preventative Strategy.

Night-time Economy

Additional police resources are brought into different areas to target alcohol related crime at different times when pubs and clubs close.

Joint Working

The Police are working closely with Sefton Security Wardens and CCTV, Sefton council, Concierge Service and Community Support Officers. The Community Safety Department have been leading on various projects including environmental improvement, i.e. clearing high growing shrubs and low branches of trees to give clear peripheral vision to people using the park. Designing out crime and secure by design again being driven by Community Safety in the Housing Market Renewal Areas. The mapping of "crime and grime" one such example is the disposal of drug paraphernalia in public spaces were the local services provide data on the location of needle finds. This information is then forwarded to drug referral agencies so they can target the area and were possible bring users into service.

Operation Tower

Targets the drug users who have been identified via the Prolific and Other Priority Offenders scheme that is operating in the area. This lawfully coerces some of the most prolific offenders into drug treatment, with the threat of being targeted by a variety of agencies if the individual fails to comply with the scheme.

Gold Zone

Officers This is due to commence in January 2005, involving additional police officer that have been financed through Housing Market Renewal Funds to provide services over and above the normal services by Merseyside police in the HMF areas.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local authorities *(a)* sought and *(b)* pursued to a successful conclusion in court the (i) greatest and (ii) lowest number of antisocial behaviour orders in 2003–04. [202856]

Ms Blears: The number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) applied for during the period from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004, as notified to the Home Office, where the main complainant was a local government authority, are given in the table by result.

Number of antisocial behaviour orders applied for by local government authorities at the magistrates court and the county court, as notified to the Home Office, by result, 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004

Name of applicant	*Area*	*Number of applications*	*Number issued*	*Number refused*
Leeds city council	West Yorkshire	92	92	—
Manchester city council	Greater Manchester	90	86	4
Liverpool city council	Merseyside	20	19	1
Salford metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	18	18	—
London borough of Camden	Greater London	17	17	—
Doncaster metropolitan borough council	South Yorkshire	12	12	—
Middlesbrough borough council	Cleveland	12	12	—
Wigan metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	11	11	—
Brighton and Hove city council	Sussex	10	10	—
London borough of Brent	Greater London	9	8	1
Peterborough council	Cambridgeshire	9	9	—
Portsmouth city council	Hampshire	9	8	1
Oldham metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	8	8	—
Wolverhampton city council	West Midlands	8	8	—
Kirklees metropolitan council	West Yorkshire	7	7	—
Sefton metropolitan borough council	Merseyside	7	7	—
Bradford city council	West Yorkshire	6	6	—
Sheffield city council	South Yorkshire	6	6	—
Bristol city council	Avon and Somerset	5	5	—
London borough of Bromley	Greater London	5	5	—
Purbeck district council	Dorset	5	5	—
Southampton council	Hampshire	5	5	—
Barnsley metropolitan borough council	South Yorkshire	4	4	—
Broxtowe borough council	Nottinghamshire	4	4	—
Derwentside district council	Durham	4	4	—
London borough of Croydon	Greater London	4	4	—
London borough of Southwark	Greater London	4	4	—
Merthyr Tydfil county borough council	South Wales	4	4	—
Rochdale metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	4	4	—
Trafford metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	4	4	—
West Lancashire district council	Lancashire	4	4	—
London borough of Westminster	Greater London	4	3	1
Newport county borough council	Gwent	4	4	—
Birmingham city council	West Midlands	3	3	—
Bolton metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	3	3	—
King's Lynn and W. Norfolk borough council	Norfolk	3	3	—
Knowsley metropolitan borough council	Merseyside	3	3	—
London borough of Greenwich	Greater London	3	3	—
Luton borough council	Bedfordshire	3	3	—
Allerdale borough council	Cumbria	2	2	—
Babergh district council	Suffolk	2	2	—
Havant borough council	Hampshire	2	2	—
London borough of Bexley	Greater London	2	2	—
London borough of Enfield	Greater London	2	2	—
London borough of Lewisham	Greater London	2	2	—
Milton Keynes borough council	Thames Valley	2	2	—
Nottingham city council	Nottinghamshire	2	2	—
Plymouth city council	Devon and Cornwall	2	2	—
Poole borough council	Dorset	2	2	—
Reading borough council	Thames Valley	2	2	—
Slough borough council	Thames Valley	2	2	—
Stockport metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	2	2	—
Stroud district council	Gloucestershire	2	2	—
Swindon borough council	Wiltshire	2	2	—
Tamworth borough council	Staffordshire	2	2	—
City of York council	North Yorkshire	2	2	—
Broxbourne borough council	Hertfordshire	1	1	—
Caerphilly county borough council	Gwent	1	1	—
Calderdale metropolitan. borough council	West Yorkshire	1	1	—
Cheltenham borough council	Gloucestershire	1	1	—
Chester city council	Cheshire	1	1	—
Christchurch borough council	Dorset	1	1	—
Dudley metropolitan borough council	West Midlands	1	1	—
Gwynedd council	North Wales	1	1	—
London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Greater London	1	1	—
Hull city council	Humberside	1	1	—
Ipswich borough council	Suffolk	1	1	—
Isle of Wight council	Hampshire	1	1	—
Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Greater London	1	1	—
Leicester city council	Leicestershire	1	1	—
London borough of Barnet	Greater London	1	1	—

Number of antisocial behaviour orders applied for by local government authorities at the magistrates' court and the county court, as notified to the Home Office, by result, 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004

Name of applicant	*Area*	*Number of applications*	*Number issued*	*Number refused*
London borough of Islington	Greater London	1	1	—
London borough of Tower Hamlets	Greater London	1	1	—
Mansfield district council	Nottinghamshire	1	1	—
North East Lincolnshire council	Humberside	1	1	—
New Forest district council	Hampshire	1	1	—
Newcastle-under-Lyme borough council	Staffordshire	1	1	—
Redcar and Cleveland council	Cleveland	1		1
Rhondda Cynon Taff council	South Wales	1	1	—
Rotherham metropolitan borough council	South Yorkshire	1	1	—
Rushmoor borough council	Hampshire	1	1	—
South Northamptonshire council	Northamptonshire	1	1	—
Staffordshire Moorlands district council	Staffordshire	1	1	—
Stockton-on-Tees borough council	Cleveland	1	1	—
Tameside metropolitan borough council	Greater Manchester	1	1	—
Torfaen county borough council	Gwent	1	1	—
Wakefield metropolitan district council	West Yorkshire	1	1	—
Warwickshire county council	Warwickshire	1	1	—
Wrexham county borough council	North Wales	1	1	—
Total		500	491	9

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* granted by the courts in Lancashire, broken down by local authority area, in each year since their introduction. [203041]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the table.

Number of ASBO applications, by result, and the number given on conviction, as notified to the Home Office, at all courts, where restrictions applied to specific local authority areas in Lancashire, 1 April 1999[1] to 30 June2004

	ASBOs on application[2]		*ASBOs on conviction*		
Period/Local authority area	*Total applications*	*Total refused*	*Total issued*	*Total issued*	*Total issued on application/on conviction*
1 June 2000—31 December 2000					
Burnley BC	2	—	2	n/a	2
Hyndburn BC	1	—	1	n/a	1
Lancaster CC	1	—	1	n/a	1
South Ribble BC	1	—	1	n/a	1
Sub-total	5	—	5	n/a	5
1 January 2001—31 December 2001					
Chorley BC	2	—	2	n/a	2
Fylde BC	2	—	2	n/a	2
Hyndburn BC	2	—	2	n/a	2
Lancaster CC	1	—	1	n/a	1
Ribble Valley BC	1	—	1	n/a	1
Sub-total	8	—	8	n/a	8
1 January 2002—31 December 2002					
Blackburn with Darwen BC	1	—	1	—	1
Hyndbum BC	1	—	1	—	1
Preston BC	1	—	1	—	1
Rossendale BC	8	—	8	—	8
West Lancashire DC	2	—	2	—	2
Sub-total	13	—	13	—	13
1 January 2003—31 December 2003					
Blackburn with Darwen BC	1	—	1	1	2
Blackpool BC	8	—	8	2	10
Burnley BC	3	—	12	15	15
Chorley BC	—	—	—	3	3
Fylde BC	1	—	1	—	1
Hyndburn BC	—	—	—	1	1
Pendle BC	3	—	3	—	3
Preston BC	—	—	—	2	2
Rossendale BC	—	—	—	1	1
South Ribble BC	—	—	—	1	1
West Lancashire DC	2	—	2	—	2
Wyre BC	—	—	—	1	1
Sub-total	18	—	18	24	42
1 January 2004—30 June 2004					
Blackburn with Darwen BC	2	—	2	3	5

Number of ASBO applications, by result, and the number given on conviction, as notified to the Home Office, at all courts, where restrictions applied to specific local authority areas in Lancashire, 1 April 1999[1] to 30 June2004

Period/Local authority area	ASBOs on application[2] Total applications	Total refused	ASBOs on conviction Total issued	Total issued	Total issued on application/on conviction
Blackpool BC	3	—	3	—	3
Burnley BC	7	2	5	4	9
Hyndburn BC	3	—	3	2	5
Lancaster CC	—	—	1	1	1
Pendle BC	1	—	1	1	2
Preston BC	1	—	1	6	7
Ribble Valley BC	—	—	—	2	2
Rossendale BC	1	—	1	—	1
South Ribble BC	—	—	—	2	2
West Lancashire DC	2	—	2	—	2
Wyre BC	2	—	2	—	2
Sub-total	22	2	20	21	41
Total	66	2	64	45	109

n/a = not applicable
[1] From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 data were collected by police force area on aggregate numbers only. During this period 5 ASBOs were notified as issued within Lancashire.
[2] Only covers applications dealt with by 30 June 2004.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 633W, on antisocial behaviour orders, what punishment will be administered to those who have breached an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO); and if he will break down the number of ASBOs *(a)* issued and *(b)* breached by local authority area. [205999]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* Persons who have been convicted for breaching their antisocial behaviour order (ASBOs) may receive a conditional discharge through to a maximum custodial sentence of five years.

The number of ASBOs issued, as reported to the Home Office, where restrictions have been imposed in specific local authority areas, are given in the table which will be placed in the Library. Data on breaches of ASBOs are collated centrally at Criminal Justice System area level only.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in each month since their introduction. [205358]

Ms Blears: The readily available information is by quarter and is given in the table.

Number of antisocial behaviour orders issued, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 June 2004 (latest available), by period, England and Wales

Period	Number issued
1 April 99 to 31 May 2000[1]	104
1 June	13
1 July to 30 September	51
1 October to 31 December	71
Total June to December 2000	135
1 January to 31 March	78
1 April to 30 June	93
1 July to 30 September	68
1 October to 31 December	83
Total for 2001	322
1 January to 31 March	77
1 April to 30 June	92
1 July to 30 September	94
1 October to 31 December	140
Total for 2002	403
1 January to 31 March	169
1 April to 30 June	223
1 July to 30 September	282
1 October to 31 December	358
Total for 2003	1,032
1 January to 31 March	480
1 April to 30 June	593
Total up to June 2004	1,073
Total issued	3,069

[1] During this period only aggregate numbers for the whole period were collected by police force area.

Budd Inquiry

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* name and *(b)* job title of Home Office officials assisting Sir Alan Budd with his current inquiry. [205338]

Mr. Charles Clarke: As he makes clear in his report Sir Alan Budd has been supported by Geraldine Meneaud-Lissenburg, a Home Office official currently on loan to the Gaming Board of Great Britain and by John Thompson, an Immigration and Nationality Directorate official.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons a Home Office official accompanied Sir Alan Budd to interview Mrs. Kimberly Quinn on 9 December. [205339]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Sir Alan was accompanied by the Secretary to the inquiry.

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Sir Alan Budd is enquiring into the circumstances surrounding other visa applications in addition to the alleged fast-tracking of the application for a UK visa for Leoncia Casalme. [206162]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The terms of reference for the inquiry were "to inquire into the handling by the Home Office of the application for indefinite leave to remain, made by Leoncia Casalme in April 2003, and to report." He investigated all actions and events relevant to those terms of reference.

Child Destruction

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 638W, on crimes against young people, what the definition is of the offence of child destruction. [205998]

Ms Blears: Child destruction is an offence under Section 1 of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. The relevant extract is as follows:

"... Any person who, with intent to destroy the life of a child capable of being born alive, by any wilful act causes a child to die before it has an existence independent of its mother, shall be guilty of child destruction and shall be liable on conviction thereof on indictment to imprisonment for life: Provided that no person shall be found guilty of an offence under this section unless it is proved that the act which caused the death of a child was not done in good faith for the purpose only of preserving the life of the mother".

Community Support Officers

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1021–22W, on community support officers, how many of the community support officers in place at the end of September are posted *(a)* in Merseyside and *(b)* the Wirral. [206299]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* At the end of September 2004 there were 82 community support officers (CSOs) on patrol in Merseyside. Of these, 28 CSOs were deployed in the Wirral Basic Command Unit, which covers that part of the Wirral which falls within the Merseyside police force area.

Merseyside police were allocated a further 85 CSO posts in November under the first round of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund.

Crime

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on crime against business premises. [205363]

Ms Blears: The Government takes business crime very seriously and recognises the costs and disruption that crime causes—as well as the knock on effects for communities and consumers. According to the 2002 Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS), published on 26 November, crimes against retail premises is seven percentage points lower than almost ten years ago and crime against manufacturers 12 per cent. lower. This demonstrates the success of the action we have taken in a number of areas to combat crimes against businesses.

For example, over the last three years we have invested £15 million to help small retailers in the most deprived areas and over 12,500 shops have benefited from this scheme, which has had a positive impact in reducing crime. We are providing almost £1 million to the Action Against Business Crime Group to create a national network of crime reduction partnerships. We launched a new "top tips" postcards containing step by step advice on protecting businesses on 23 September this year and will be publishing a more detailed booklet on surveying business premises early next year. We have also appointed a Business Crime Reduction Adviser in each of the Government Offices in the regions to help a wide range of businesses, as well as established a dedicated business crime team in the Home Office.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will include crime against property on business premises as a police key performance indicator; and if he will make a statement. [205416]

Ms Blears: As part of the drive to reduce bureaucracy, the Home Office is reducing the number of Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for the police and we have no plans to introduce an additional national performance indicator on business crime. However, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are currently undertaking an audit of the crime and disorder and misuse of drugs problems in their area and are required to put in place effective strategies to tackle these. Where business crime has been identified as a specific problem locally, these should appear as a local priority within the strategy for that area. The 10 regional Business Crime Reduction Advisers, appointed by the Home Office, are working locally to help ensure that businesses are consulted as part of this process and that their concerns are reflected in strategies.

In addition, local priorities identified in crime, disorder and misuse of drugs strategies in the areas of burglary, vehicle crime, street crime and antisocial behaviour will also benefit businesses, as they are often the victim of these types of crime in and around town centres.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that crimes against business are recorded separately from other crimes; and if he will make a statement. [205542]

Ms Blears: The Home Office currently publishes annual total crime statistics recorded by the police in England and Wales for the following offences specifically relating to business crime; robbery of business property, theft by an employee, theft from shops and theft of an automatic machine or meter. The most recent figures are available in Statistical Bulletin 10/04 "Crime in England and Wales 2003–04" at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0304.html. However, we recognise that these figures provide a limited picture of the true nature of crimes experienced by the business sector. We are also aware that businesses do not report every incidence of crime for a variety of reasons.

Bearing this in mind, on 26 November, the Home Office also published the initial findings of the 2002 Commercial Victimisation Survey. This provided

further information on the actual levels of business crime as well as an indication of the proportion of businesses which report the crimes which they suffer.

The Home Office Business Crime Team is also looking at how current information on business crime, including retail crime, can be enhanced, in particular, whether it is feasible to identify crimes against businesses in police recorded crime statistics.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the targets for solving *(a)* theft from cars, *(b)* domestic burglary, *(c)* robbery and *(d)* violent crimes for (i) police forces, (ii) nationally and (iii) for Northamptonshire police are: and what rates have been achieved by (A) police forces nationally and (B) Northamptonshire police. [203798]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has not agreed specific targets for detecting crime with individual police forces, however police forces will have locally agreed targets which are published in local policing plans. The National Policing Plan for 2005–08, published in November 2004, acknowledges however that there is a strong link between the Public Service Agreement to bring 1.25 million offences to justice by 2007–08 and the necessity to improve sanction detection performance. In order to achieve the PSA target it is estimated that it will be necessary to achieve a sanction detection rate of at least 25 per cent.

Local Criminal Justice Boards (which include chief constables) are currently negotiating targets for bringing offences to justice for local areas. The method being used to do this provides each force with an estimated sanction detection rate that will be required to achieve the agreed offences brought to justice target.

Nationally the sanction detection rate for theft from vehicles is 6 per cent., for burglary 15 per cent., for robbery 18 per cent. and for violence against the person 50 per cent. Nationally the detection rate for theft from vehicles is 16 per cent., for burglary 15 per cent., for robbery 19 per cent. and for violence against the person 64 per cent. (all figures for 2003–04).

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the most frequent type of crime committed within the Greater London area was in the last year for which figures are available. [206183]

Ms Blears: The available information collected centrally relates to the Metropolitan police force area. The specific offence with the highest number of recorded offences in 2003–04 was theft from a vehicle with 103,899. There were 142,180 offences of other theft or unauthorised taking recorded in this period but these are made up of several different offences that cannot be included in another specific theft offence classification and cannot be separately identified.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of *(a)* the average cost per incident of theft, *(b)* the average loss per completed burglary and *(c)* the average loss per completed robbery to the retail sector in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003; what the level of incidence of (A) violence against staff and (B) completed robbery in the retail sector was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [202140]

Ms Blears: The Home Office does not collect these figures on a regular basis. However a commercial victimisation survey was carried out in 2002 which covered the incidence and cost of crime suffered by retailers in the preceding 12 months. A summary of the findings of that survey was published on the 26 November and is available on the Home Office website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/rfpubs1.html. A detailed report of the findings is due to be published in spring 2005.

The British Retail Consortium carry out a regular survey of their members. Relevant findings from their annual surveys are set out as follows:

	Average value of goods stolen by customers	*Average stock loss per completed burglary*	*Incidents of robbery per 100 outlets*	*Average loss per robbery*	*Incidents of violence per 1,000 staff*
2001	111	1,858	6	1,003	7
2002	88	2,722	5	1,967	6
2003	162	4,881	8	1,677	7

Source:
BRC 10 Annual Survey and 11 Annual Survey

The Government recognises the detrimental impact that crime can have on retailers, their staff and the communities they serve and is taking positive action to reduce it.

On 12 October 2004 I met with senior retailers and their trade associations to discuss the key issues faced by retailers and to seek their views on joint action to reduce retail crime. Actions coming out of this will build on the work already under way.

The Home Office has supported the work of the British Retail Consortium in developing retail crime reduction partnerships and is providing 899 of funding for them to set up the Action Against Business Crime (AABC) Group. This Group will provide a national network of business crime reduction partnerships in town and shopping centres across England and Wales. 100 new partnerships will be set up in addition to the 100 or so already established, who will be provided with a support network.

Recognising that a large proportion of retail crime is drug related, pilot outreach schemes have been set up, with £170,000 Home Office funding, in Brighton and Northampton to tackle the link between retail crime and drugs misuse.

We have recently completed the "Small Retailers in Deprived Areas' initiative which provided £15 million of government funding to the most vulnerable businesses to enable them to install security measures. Over 12,500

businesses benefited from the scheme which also included a training programme on crime reduction for retailers.

Advice on crime reduction information is available from the Home Office produced postcards "Don't Discount Crime" and "Putting Crime out of Business", both of which provide easily accessible crime reduction advice to small businesses. These are available on the Home Office website. The Health and Safety Executive has also produced specific advice on managing the risk of work related violence.

Retailers can obtain further specific advice and assistance on crime reduction from the Business Crime Reduction Advisers based in each of the Government Offices, the Home Office website and their trade associations.

From November 2004 the police will be able to issue fixed penalty notices for some cases of retail or commercial theft. This will ensure that more minor incidents of such theft are dealt with quickly and effectively and the 80 penalty will act as a strong deterrent for first time offenders.

Roma

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress he has made in constructing a national action plan for the UK contribution to the European Union Decade of Roma Inclusion; and what consultation he has conducted with Gypsy and Traveller groups. [205310]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion is an initiative involving eight states in central and south-east Europe with the objective of speeding up and improving the social inclusion and the economic status of the Roma in those countries. The United Kingdom is not a participant.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister continues to consult Gypsies and Travellers and their stakeholder groups on a range of important issues, including the planning system, appropriate accommodation and other matters.

Drug-Related Crimes (Lincolnshire)

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes committed in Lincolnshire have been drug-related in each year since 1997. [204791]

Ms Blears: Information on drug related offences is not collected centrally for recorded crime. The available information relates to recorded drug offences. Statistics for the Lincolnshire police force area are given in the following tables.

Table 1: Recorded drug offences in Lincolnshire—1997–98 to 2001–02[1]

Period	Total	Trafficking	Possession	Other drug offences
1997	235	235	[2]—	[2]—
1998–99[3]	1,229	159	1,050	20
1999–2000	975	151	814	10
2000–01	906	128	772	6
2001–02	1,116	169	942	5

[1] The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.
[2] Not available.
[3] Figures using the expanded coverage and revised rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.

Table 2: Recorded drug offences in Lincolnshire—2002–03 and 2003–04[1]

	Period	
	2002–03	2003–04
Total	1,060	1,061
Trafficking	161	220
Possession	894	836
Other drug offences	5	5

[1] The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Citizenship Education

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ensure that schools include information about the criminal justice system as part of citizenship education. [206149]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

Understanding the role and operation of the criminal and civil justice system in our democracy is an important part of citizenship education. Pupils learn about the work of the courts, Parliament and the Government in making and shaping the law. Detailed guidance sent to all schools by the QCA includes specific units to help teachers to develop pupils' understanding of these issues. For example, the unit "How do rules and laws affect me?" helps pupils in KS 1 and 2 (ages 5–10) to discuss and learn about how laws are made in a democracy. Other units for pupils in KS3 (ages 11–14) and KS4 (ages 14–16) build on what they have learned in primary schools by looking at how laws are enforced, how crime affects young people, victims of crime and their communities.

Exclusion Orders

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many exclusion orders from licensed premises have been granted in England in each of the last 10 years. [201824]

Ms Blears: The information on the number of exclusion orders granted under the Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act 1980 is not collected centrally.

Fireworks

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firework-related

complaints there were to the police in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2003 in (i) England and Wales, (ii) Wales and (iii) the South Wales Police Force area. [203899]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Knife Crime

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many knife crimes took place in each *(a)* month and *(b)* year since 1997, broken down by police authority; and how many resulted in (i) fatal injury, (ii) serious injury and (iii) minor injury in each case. [205356]

Ms Blears: The number of offences involving knives is not separated out in the recorded crime statistics. Therefore no information is available on knife offences causing serious or minor injury. The Homicide Index holds details on the number of homicides where the apparent method of killing was the use of a sharp instrument. The available information from 1997–98 to 2002–03 is given in the following table. This information is not published at police force area level.

Homicides involving the use of a sharp instrument

	Number
1997–98	202
1998–99	202
1999–2000	213
2000–01	214
2001–02	262
2002–03	272

Lancashire Police

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change there has been in funding of Lancashire police in each year since 1997. [205070]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the table.

	General government grants[1] *£ million*	*Annual percentage change in general government grants Percentage*	*Specific grants and capital provision*[2] *£ million*	*Council tax precept Percentage*
1997–98	146.9	—	2.2	22.9
1998–99	153.6	4.6	2.4	23.1
1999–2000	155.9	1.5	2.2	25.2
2000–01	162.2	4.0	6.6	27.6
2001–02	168.1	3.6	18.2	30.2
2001–02[3]	164.0	—	18.2	30.2
2002–03	168.7	2.9	15.1	33.1
2003–04	177.1	4.9	15.4	39.6
2004–05	182.9	3.3	15.8	45.9
2005–06[4]	190.8	4.3	N/A	N/A

[1] General Government grants comprise Home Office Police Grant, ODPM Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates.
[2] Includes funding from the Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Fund, Basic Command Unit funding, Street Crime Initiative, Community Support Officer funding, Special Priority Payments, the DNA Expansion Programme, capital grant, Airwave and the Premises Improvement Fund. Total for specific grants in 2004–05 are an estimate.
[3] Figures for 2001–02 are not directly comparable with 2002–03 due to the change in funding arrangements of NCS/NCIS. Adjusted figures for 2001–02 are therefore included.
[4] The provisional police funding settlement for 2005–06 was announced on 2 December. Full specific grant allocations and capital provision for 2005–06 are not yet available.

Lincolnshire Police Force

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* police civilian staff the Lincolnshire police force has had in each year since 1997. [204793]

Ms Blears: The information requested is set out in the table. Between March 1997 and August 2004 police officer numbers increased by 15 and police (support) staff numbers increased by 132. At the end of September Lincolnshire police had 44 Community Support Officers.

Lincolnshire police

As at 31 March:	*Number of police officers*	*Number of police (support) staff*
1997	1,196	521
1998	1,191	541
1999	1,140	517
2000	1,115	516
2001	1,202	561
2002	1,198	600
2003	1,221	637
2004	1,228	653
2004 (31 August)	1,211	n/a

Police numbers can fluctuate because of differences between a force's wastage and recruitment cycles. The force aims to maintain police strength at March 2004 levels.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offences have been recorded by Lincolnshire Police Force in each year since 1995, broken down by category. [204796]

Ms Blears: The information requested is given in the tables.

Table 1: Recorded offences in Lincolnshire—1995 to 2001–02[1]

Period	*Total*	*Violence against the person*	*Sexual offences*	*Robbery*	*Burglary*
1995	48,015	2,514	367	128	12,243
1996	47,069	2,701	293	138	12,891
1997	43,381	3,051	329	107	10,551
1998–99[2]	46,670	4,239	393	149	10,257
1999–2000	46,170	3,866	325	178	10,719
2000–01	44,884	3,743	281	191	9,583
2001–02	49,797	4,812	414	251	9,592

Period	*Theft and handling stolen goods*	*Fraud and forgery*	*Criminal damage*	*Drug offences*	*Other*
1995	22,774	1,163	8,138	219	469
1996	21,085	1,148	8,289	185	411
1997	20,085	1,382	7,145	235	496
1998–99[2]	19,328	2,723	7,728	1,229	624
1999–2000	19,551	1,641	8,391	975	524
2000–01	18,938	1,662	9,078	906	502
2001–02	19,728	1,968	11,282	1,116	634

[1] The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.
[2] Figures using the expanded coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.

Table 2: Recorded offences in Lincolnshire—2002–03 and 2003–04[1]

	Period	
	2002–03	*2003–04*
Total	61,949	60,377
Violence against the person	9,238	10,148
Sexual offences	583	636
Robbery	307	304
Burglary	10,831	9,052
Theft and handling stolen goods	22,745	20,665
Fraud and forgery	2,580	2,320
Criminal damage	13,694	15,176
Drug offences	1,060	1,061
Other	911	1,015

[1] The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Ministerial Cars

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list occasions since 1 January 2002 when he has authorised his official car to be used to transport unauthorised personnel; and if he will estimate the cost to the public purse. [205944]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* I have not used my official car to transport unauthorised personnel on any occasion. The last Home Secretary has said that he only authorised the transport of people in his car on journeys which were being undertaken in any event for purposes for which his official car is provided.

Missing Persons Helpline

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will meet the case management and IT staff costs of the National Missing Persons Helpline to implement from 17 January 2005 the National Agreement for sharing of information on missing people with all UK police forces. [205489]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has committed to provide the National Missing Persons Helpline with 120,000 to fund the costs associated with the implementation of the National Agreement until the end of March 2005. This will enable the first phase of the implementation of the National Agreement to take place.

The Home Office has been considering with the National Missing Persons Helpline a range of potential sources of sustainability funding for the National Agreement beyond March 2005.

Police

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of the changes in the regime for local authority funding on the ability of Kent police to meet their crime reduction target; and if he will make a statement. [203022]

Ms Blears: Government general grants for police authorities are based on a formula assessment of relative need and on local resources. Kent Police Authority continues to be protected by the grant damping mechanism that limits the impact of year on year changes. It has gained £14.7 million in 2004–05 and under the provisional grant settlement is provided with £11.5 million in 2005–06.

The Police Performance Monitoring report for 2003–04, published in September 2004, looks at performance over six domains of policing. This report shows that performance in Kent is generally improving and is above that of its Most Similar Forces for the domains of Reducing Crime and Investigating Crime. Overall target crime levels fell by 6.0 per cent. Domestic burglary fell by 1.9 per cent., vehicle crime by 7.6 per cent. and robbery by 5.6 per cent.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many pieces of guidance have been sent to *(a)* police forces and *(b)* police authorities in each year since 1997; and how many pages each piece of guidance contained. [205332]

Ms Blears: This information is not kept centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated cost to police authorities is in this financial year of increased British Medical Association(recommended charges for police surgeons. [199407]

Ms Blears: I understand the matter is still under consideration by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Forensic Medical Examiners. I have made no estimate of the cost to police authorities of an increase in charges.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 50W, on what dates representatives of the Home Office met key stakeholders to discuss the future of the police training centre at Bruche; who was present at each of these meetings; and what options for the future of the Bruche centre were considered. [203733]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: Under the modernisation of probationer training, various options for the national implementation of the modernised probationer training programme have been discussed throughout 2004. The Head of Police Training and Development in the Home Office has been the lead official in most of these discussions, which have also involved the former and current Chief Executives of CENTREX, several members of CENTREX's Senior Management Team, the Association of Chief Police Officers, various representatives of the Association of Police Authorities, and others.

The national implementation of the new probationer training programme will necessarily be linked to the cessation of current Foundation Training provision at CENTREX regional training centres, and there will be implications for the future of CENTREX's estate. However, the precise nature of these implications is a matter for the CENTREX Board and Senior Management Team, and no firm decisions regarding the future of the Bruche centre itself have yet been made.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accidents there were involving police vehicles in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland in the last year for which figures are available. [204824]

Ms Blears: Figures on the number of accidents involving police vehicles are not published centrally.

Property Searches (Terrorism Legislation)

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the use of anti-terrorism legislation to search properties in Rusholme and Moss Side in December. [205365]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: Greater Manchester Police have informed me that on the night of Monday 29 December a man was arrested by traffic police for a routine traffic matter and was charged with several motoring offences. A search of a vehicle was carried out to confirm his identity in line with usual procedures. As a result of items found in the car, police then obtained warrants under the Terrorism Act 2000 for three addresses—one in Cheetham Hill, one in Moss Side and one in Rusholme.

All three addresses were searched by police officers and, as a result of inquiries, five people were arrested under Immigration legislation and detained pending inquiries by the Immigration Service.

Inquiries are now concluded and we are satisfied that no terrorist related offences have been committed.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions anti-terrorism legislation has been used to *(a)* stop and arrest individuals and *(b)* search premises; on how many of these occasions charges ensued; and on how many occasions charges under anti-terrorism legislation were brought. [205366]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: For the financial year 2003–04, there were 25,692 searches made under section 44(1), Terrorism Act 2000, with 373 resultant arrests; and 8,106 searches under section 44(2), with 118 resultant arrests. Stop and search powers under the Terrorism Act are should not be evaluated using arrest statistics. The powers are used by police in areas potentially targeted by terrorists to prevent and deter attacks

Further details are available in Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/04 "Arrests for Notifiable Offences and the Operation of Certain Powers under PACE, England and Wales 2003/04" which is published by Research Development and Statistics (RDS) on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk/rds/

Statistics on arrests and charges from 11 September 2001 until 30 September 2004 under the Terrorism Act 2000 are available on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk/terrorism/. (These are compiled from recent police records and are therefore subject to change as cases go through the system.)

Arrests

Police records show that from 11 September 2001 until 30 September 2004, 664 people were arrested under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Charges

118 of these were charged under the Act. Of these, 44 were also charged with offences under other legislation.

135 were charged under other legislation. This includes charges for terrorist offences that are already covered in general criminal law such as murder, grievous bodily harm and use of firearms or explosives.

Convictions

17 Individuals have been convicted of offences under the Terrorism Act Records on the number of searches of premises and resultant charges are not collated centrally.

Security Alerts

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with *(a)* US security officials and *(b)* UK security officials regarding security alerts at (i) Newark airport, (ii) JFK airport and (iii) Dulles-Washington airport in (A) 2002, (B) 2003 and (C) 2004; what public information was available regarding any such security alerts; and what discussions he has had with non-government employees regarding such security alerts. [203250]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Both my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and I have had frequent discussions with US authorities about aviation security over the period in question. Aviation security has been a high priority for both countries since September 11 and has featured regularly in my own discussions with the US Homeland Security Secretary, Tom Ridge. We have considered the intelligence on terrorist threats to aviation and the range of preventative measures we have put in place. Additionally, my right hon. Friend has had frequent discussions with representatives of the aviation industry, through the medium of the National Aviation Security Committee and in other contacts.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202256]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, departmental special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity on nine occasions at an average total cost of £3,938. The countries visited were USA (twice),France (twice), Spain, Switzerland, India/ Pakistan, Portugal and Germany.

Information on domestic trips taken by special advisers is not held centrally. This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Civil Service Management Code:

Special Constables

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables have been appointed in each year since 1997; and how many are currently employed. [200287]

Ms Blears: Special constables are volunteers and are not employees. The total number of special constables in England and Wales in each year since 1997 is as follows:

31 March	*Number of special constables*
1997	19,874
1998	18,256
1999	16,484
2000	14,347
2001	12,722
2002	11,598
2003	11,032
2004	10,988

There are no separate statistics published for the number of special constables appointed each year. Research suggests that the main reason for the fall in numbers is external commitments, with ineffective management and deployment also contributing. Some specials leave to join as regular officers.

The Government have been working on a wide variety of measures with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the special constabulary and other stakeholders to arrest the decline in numbers. These include the national specials weekend, a national advertising campaign and capacity building funding, enabling forces to target resources to help improve recruitment, retention and management.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables are serving in the Metropolitan Police Force. [206201]

Ms Blears: Figures on special constabulary strength are contained in Home Office Statistical Bulletin 13/04. On 31 March 2004 there were 742 special constables serving in the Metropolitan police, an increase of 50 compared with 31 March 2003.

Tolleshunt D'Arcy Case

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will instruct the Essex Constabulary to give to Mr. Jeremy Bamber's solicitors all audio tapes in its possession relating to events at White House Farm, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, 7 August 1985. [204678]

Ms Blears: The disclosure of information held by Essex Constabulary is a matter for the Chief Officer of the force, unless otherwise instructed to do so by a court. If the information requested is available under the access provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 then Mr. Bamber may have his own rights to gain access to such information under this legislation.

Travel Costs

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203787]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Travel costs for special advisers who accompany their Ministers overseas is included in the annual list on Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers.

Details on the costs of Ministers' domestic travel and further details on the costs of special advisers travel for this period are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Young Offenders

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 396W, on young offenders, what plans he has to implement basic skills tests at regular periods throughout a young offender's sentence. [206000]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

There is a statutory requirement to assess basic skills levels of all prisoners entering custody. Juvenile offenders are currently assessed upon entry to prison, upon release from prison and at the end of their sentence in the community. Assessment of juvenile basic skills level is carried out using the PLUS assessment tool.

Currently, convicted young adult offenders are assessed for crimeogenic factors using Offender Assessment System (known as OASys) a toolkit developed by the National Probation Service which can highlight an offenders educational need as part of the need to reduce re-offending. The assessment contributes to a plan for life and is linked to a national computer system containing reference to their skills and training.

In future the National Offender Management Service in conjunction with the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) and its partners will include basic skills achievement monitoring as part of the individual learner record. The record will include information on the learner's basic skills level allowing practitioners in the education field to track the progress of the learner. The first rollout of the record will take place as part of the OLSU future service delivery in three development regions next August followed by a national rollout in 2006.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Arup Economics and Planning

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what preliminary reports he has received from Arup Economics and Planning concerning their research project LGR65/12/110, Evaluation of the Role and Impact of Regional Chambers; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [206074]

Keith Hill: The technical Report following the feasibility study has been completed and a copy has been made available in the Library of the House. The interim report is currently being finalised by ARUP and will be submitted to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister in January 2005. A copy will be placed in the Library of the House when available.

Building Regulations

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to revise Part J of the Building Regulations to enhance the integrity of domestic oil tanks. [206690]

Phil Hope: The Part J requirements, including those for protection against oil pollution, came into effect on 1 April 2002 following extensive consultation. A comprehensive survey of the impact of this is planned for next year, and it would be premature to revise the requirements before the results of this survey are available. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware, however, that the Environment Agency and industry are becoming more concerned about domestic oil pollution, and officials are considering with them what further advice might be issued.

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes have been made to business rate *(a)* multipliers and *(b)* reliefs since May 1997. [205254]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The calculation of the business rate multiplier is laid down in the Local Government Finance Act 1988. It rises with inflation based on the Retail Price Index (RPI) of September except in a revaluation year when it is re-based to take into account of the overall rise in rateable value arising from the revaluation.

The changes to the multiplier since 1997 are as follows:

	Changes
1997–98	45.8
1998–99	47.4
1999–2000	48.9
2000–01	41.6
2001–02	43.0
2002–03	43.7
2003–03	44.4
2004–05	45.6
2005–06	42.2

The multiplier for 2005–06 includes an uplift to pay for the small business rate relief scheme. Ratepayers that meet the small business rate relief criteria have a lower multiplier of 41.5p used to calculate their rate bill.

The following reliefs have been introduced since May 1997

A. Rural Rate Relief introduced December 1997

50 per cent. relief applied to qualifying properties as follows:

(a) . General store and post office is a rural settlement under the Rateable Value (RV) threshold below

(b) Public House or petrol station under the RV threshold below.

Rural rate relief	*1997*	*2000*	*2005*
General stores and post offices (Mandatory)	5,000	6,000	7,000
Petrol stations and public houses (Mandatory)	n/a	9,000	10,500
Other businesses (Mandatory)	n/a	6,000	7,000
Discretionary rural rate relief	10,000	12,000	14,000

B. Former Agricultural Premises (introduced 2001)

50 per cent. relief is offered to qualifying properties under a threshold of £6,000. This threshold will be increased from April 2005 to £7,000.

C. Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) (introduced from 1 April 2004)

80 per cent. relief for qualifying hereditaments.

D. Small Business Rate Relief (introduced from 1 April 2005)

Qualifying properties below £5,000 will get 50 per cent. rate relief and this will decrease on a sliding scale of 1 per cent. for every £100 up to £9,999. Qualifying properties with a RV from £5,000 to £9,999 will have their rate bills calculated using the small business non-domestic rating multiplier.

Qualifying properties with an RV from £10,000 to £14,999 outside London and from £10,000 to £21,499 within London will have the small business non-domestic rating multiplier applied to the calculation of their bill.

E. Empty property relief

Small properties under the threshold do not pay rates on empty properties. The threshold was £1,500 in 1997, raised to £1,900 in 2000 and £2,200 in 2005.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205122]

Phil Hope: All of the official Christmas cards sent out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister included a contribution to charity. The charity to benefit was WaterAid.

David Davis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205123]

Phil Hope: It is the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy to send mail by second class post where ever possible. 3,500 official Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Christmas cards were sent in 2003 and 2004. The cost of postage is not recorded separately but is estimated at current Royal Mail prices to be in the region of 735. All expenditure incurred in the purchase of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

David Davis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost was of purchasing official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205124]

Phil Hope: The cost of purchasing official Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Christmas cards in 2003 was £3,091.58 + VAT and £3,180 + VAT in 2004. A proportion of this cost (25 pence per card) is donated to charity. All expenditure incurred in the purchase of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

David Davis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205125]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister sent out 3,500 Christmas Cards in 2003 and shall be sending out up to 3,500 in 2004.

Council Tax

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many pensioners have been prosecuted for non-payment of council tax in each year since 1997. [206605]

Mr. Raynsford: Non-payment of council tax is not a criminal offence. If the appropriate reminder notices have been sent and a debt remains unpaid, a local billing authority may apply to the Magistrates court for a Liability Order which formally establishes that there is a debt. The Liability Order enables enforcement action to be taken.

The Government do not collect council tax enforcement statistics. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy does collect statistics from information supplied by some local authorities. However, these figures are not broken down by age group.

Fire Control Rooms

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the location is of each fire control room in England, broken down by region; and how many people are employed by each. [204815]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is tabled as follows.

Staff in post on 31 March 2004 (all persons having a fire control rank)

Region	*Staff (full-time equivalents)*
East of England: six control rooms	
Kempston, Bedford	25
Huntingdon	31
Hutton (Essex)	44
Hertford	24
Heathersett, Norwich	26
Ipswich	23
East Midlands: five control rooms	
Littleover, Derby	29
Glenfield, Leicester	31
Lincoln	24
Northampton	26
Arnold, Nottingham	25

Staff in post on 31 March 2004 (all persons having a fire control rank)

Region	*Staff (full-time equivalents)*
London: one control room	
London SE1	103
North East: four control rooms	
Hartlepool	25
Durham	28
Morpeth	20
Newcastle upon Tyne	40
North West: five control rooms	
Winsford	27
Cockermouth	19
Swinton, Manchester	65
Fulwood, Preston	43
Bootle, Liverpool	58
South East: nine control rooms	
Tilehurst, Reading	34
Aylesbury	20
Eastbourne	26
Eastleigh	38
Newport (Isle of Wight)	12
Tovil, Maidstone	39
Kidlington, Oxford	22
Reigate	29
Chichester	28
South West: seven control rooms	
Bristol	32
Truro	16
Clyst St. George, Exeter	31
Dorchester	23
Quedgeley, Gloucester	23
Cheddon Fitzpaine, Taunton	19
Potterne, Devizes	22
West Midlands: five control rooms	
Worcester	21
Shrewsbury	16
Stone	33
Royal Leamington Spa	18
Birmingham	65
Yorkshire and the Humber: four control rooms	
Kingston upon Hull	28
Northallerton	22
Sheffield	39
Birkenshaw, West Yorkshire	51

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service annual returns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what systems he has put in place to monitor the impact on the performance of fire control services of the proposed transition from the existing control room structure to a structure of nine regional control rooms for the whole of England. [206065]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be putting in place a standard set of performance measures appropriate to the fire and rescue control service, well in advance of the first regional control centre going live. These will be used to measure consistently the performance of current control rooms, and will provide a baseline for the performance of the regional control centres.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he took to publicise the meeting held in Oxford on Friday 12 November on regional fire control centres; how many people attended that meeting; what the total cost of organising, conducting and publicising the meeting was; and which fire and rescue authorities were represented. [206076]

Mr. Raynsford: The meeting in question was held on Thursday 11 November in Oxford Town Hall. It was announced at the meeting of the Oxfordshire county Council scrutiny committee on 25 October. Additionally the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a press statement to all local media. I mentioned the meeting in an interview with the Oxford Mail a couple of days prior to the meeting. All MPs and councillors in Oxfordshire (both Country and District) were written to informing them of the meeting as were members of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and other key stakeholders.

The meeting was attended by around 50 people. Excluding staff time the total cost of organising, conducting and publicising the meeting was approximately £700. The meeting only covered one Fire and Rescue Authority.

Firelink Radio System

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons the contract award announcement in respect of the Firelink Radio System was not made in November; and when he expects it to be made. [206219]

Mr. Raynsford: The Firelink contract award announcement was postponed following a detailed assessment of the technical and commercial matters to be resolved before the conclusion of negotiations. The contract award date the project is working to is May 2005.

Government Office Regions

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport concerning the savings achieved by English Heritage in abandoning a structure based on the Government office regions and instead adopting four territories, north, south, east and west; and if he will disseminate information on such savings to bodies for which his Department is responsible. [206798]

Mr. Raynsford: English Heritage is retaining its nine regional offices, based on the Government office regions, and is strengthening them by appointing four new territory directors. No discussions have been held with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister about savings resulting from English Heritage's reorganisation. Any savings would be a matter for my right.. hon. Friend the Secretary of State, for Culture, Media and Sport and for English Heritage.

Grants

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list, by council, voluntary sector grants awarded in the last three years. [202915]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply

Local authorities do not routinely report centrally on voluntary sector grants awarded.

The Home Office is currently carrying out research about local authorities' funding of voluntary and community organisations. This will provide aggregate information on funding but will not list individual local authorities.

Findings from this research will be published next autumn.

Homelessness

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of people accessing shelters for the homeless on Christmas Day in each of the last 10 years. [205062]

Phil Hope: This information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will make public the report of Sir Michael Lyons' review of local government finance. [206810]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have appointed Sir Michael Lyons to undertake an independent inquiry that will consider the detailed case for changes to the present system of local government funding and make recommendations on any changes that are necessary and how to implement them. The inquiry's terms of reference require it to report by the end of 2005 to my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I expect the report to be published to the same timescale.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account he will take of the costs of providing local authority services in rural areas within the distribution of formula grant; and if he will make a statement. [206851]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given in reply to the right hon. and learned Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Mr. Hogg) on 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 846W.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to give local authorities more flexibility on how they spend grant support. [206853]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government generally seek to limit the amount of funding for local government which is centrally controlled or ring-fenced. In 2005–06 the percentage of central grant which is ring-fenced will fall again by a further 2 per cent. to 9 per cent..

Education is the Government's key national priority and we aim to give schools as much stability, freedom and flexibility in their funding as possible. In order to do so, we have already announced our proposals to provide, from 2006–07, funding for schools through a grant from the Department for Education and Skills to local authorities. On non-schools spending we will continue to provide as much freedom and flexibility to local authorities as possible.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the per capita formula grant support was given by his Department in 2004–05 to *(a)* Lincolnshire county council, *(b)* Lincolnshire Police Authority, *(c)* Boston borough council, *(d)* East Lindsey district council, *(e)* City of Lincoln council, *(f)* North Kesteren district council, *(g)* South Holland district council, *(h)* South Kesteren district council and *(i)* West Lindsey district council. [206855]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given in reply to the right hon. and learned Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Mr. Hogg) on 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 848W.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average per capita formula grant support was for all local authority services in 2004–05 in *(a)* England, *(b)* inner London, *(c)* outer London and *(d)* Lincolnshire. [206856]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given in reply to the right hon. and learned Member for Sleaford and North Hykeham (Mr. Hogg) on 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 847W.

Local Government Pensions

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people will be affected by the decision to increase the minimum age at which benefits from the local government pension scheme can be paid from 50 to 55 years; and if he will phase in this change. [205902]

Phil Hope: It is not possible to calculate the number of people affected by the Scheme change referred to by my hon. Friend because any incidence of payment of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) benefits between the ages of 50 and 55 is subject to individual employer decisions. The change is being phased in; members who are 50 or over by 31 March 2005 are unaffected, this means that the minimum benefit age for all existing members effectively increases in one year steps between 2005 and 2010.

Local Planning Authority Staff

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of working days of planning department staff employed by local planning authorities in England were lost due to sickness in the last period for which figures are available. [206079]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Planning

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning appeals against conversion of existing residential accommodation in Oxford to flats for multiple occupation he has determined in the last two years; and how many were allowed. [205886]

Keith Hill: The information requested is tabled as follows:

Oxford city council

	Number of decisions issued	*Number allowed*
2002–03	7	3
2003–04	11	6
2004–05 up to 30 November 2004	16	11

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the Regional Planning Guidance notes in force in England and the date of the publication of each. [205253]

Keith Hill: Regional planning guidance (RPG) was replaced by regional spatial strategies (RSS) on commencement of part one of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. At the same time, secondary regulations prescribed that the existing RPG would become the RSS for the region. The following table shows the RSS's currently in force in England along with their date of publication. The titles of these documents still refer to RPG as they were published prior to commencement of the Act. All documents listed now have RSS status.

	Date of publication
Regional Planning Guidance for the North East to 2016 (RPG1)	November 2002
Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia to 2016 (RPG6) and the parts of RPG9, below, that relate to Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Essex	November 2000
Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands to 2021 (RPG8)	January 2002
Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) as revised in July by 2004 by the Regional Transport Strategy (Chapter 9) and the Ashford Growth Area (Chapter 12) and excluding parts relating to Greater London, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Essex	March 2001
Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10)	September 2001
Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11)	June 2004
Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and the Humber to 2016 (RPG12)	October 2001
Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13)	March 2003

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203915]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203974]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mr. Miliband) on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W.

Travel Costs

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203786]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed on 29 May 2002.

Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House.

For details on the cost of Ministers' domestic travel, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 568W, to the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (David Davis).

Information on the travel costs for special advisers who accompany Ministers on overseas visits are included in the annual list on overseas travel by Cabinet Ministers. Information on domestic visits could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

For travel costs incurred by officials, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 20 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 201W, to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable).

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the "Ministerial Code" and the "Civil Service Management Code".

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204140]

Phil Hope: The working time regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has 30 officials working in ministerial private offices who have signed a waiver under working time regulations.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

School Sport

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much of the additional

£431 million given to expand school sport has been specifically allocated to targeting the participation of girls. [206692]

Mr. Caborn: On 14 December the Prime Minister announced that £519 million had been allocated to continue and build on the National Strategy for PE and School Sport in 2006–07 and 2007–08. None of that funding has been specifically allocated at national level to targeting girls' participation.

The national strategy is reaching out to all pupils and the target to ensure that 85 per cent. of five to 16-year-olds doing at least two hours high quality PE and school sport each week by 2008 will be a key driver for schools to ensure that they are genuinely inclusive in their provision. At local level, we expect school sport partnerships to make provision for targeting girls, where that is necessary, by broadening opportunities and tailoring delivery to girls' needs. Over 40 different sports and activities—attractive to both boys and girls—are already offered across all partnership schools, with the average per school being 14. Dance is the most popular activity after football—it's offered in 94 per cent. of partnership schools.

To date, more than 1,200 secondary schools have benefited from the Youth Sport Trust/Nike Girls in Sport initiative. This seeks to encourage greater participation by girls through changing or relaxing kit specifications, extending the range of activities (e.g. aerobics or girls' football) and improving showers and changing rooms. All schools in school sport partnerships are encouraged to adopt these principles.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Parliamentary Security Co-ordinator

Dame Marion Roe: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire representing the House of Commons Commission what progress has been made in the appointment of a Parliamentary Security Co-ordinator to lead the implementation of the Security Review. [207047]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Mr. Speaker and the Lord Chairman of Committees have appointed Mr. Peter Mason as Parliamentary Security Co-ordinator to carry out the duties described in my answer to the hon. Lady of 8 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 449W. Mr. Mason will be on secondment from the security service, and his appointment is for a period of two years.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the contract for the Physical Integrator role for the Future Aircraft Carrier project is worth. [203935]

Mr. Ingram: The initial contract for the Physical Integrator role for the Future Aircraft Carrier could be up to £5 million depending on timing and content.

BAE Systems

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* contracted price and *(b)* in-service date was originally agreed with BAE Systems for the building of the Mount Bay and Cardigan Bay vessels at Govan; what the latest forecasts are; what the reasons for the changes are; and if he will make a statement. [199907]

Mr. Ingram: BAE Systems was awarded a contract for £122 million in November 2001 to build two Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary). The company is contracted to deliver the two vessels to the Ministry of Defence, which will then conduct user trials before declaring the ships to be "in-service". At the time of the original contract, Mounts Bay was expected to enter service in March 2005 and Cardigan Bay in October 2005. Technical difficulties with the design and construction of the first two Bay Class ships by Swan Hunter, the lead yard for the class, have had a knock-on effect on BAE Systems. The resulting delays mean that the latest forecast in-service date for the first of Class, Largs Bay, is 2006. The impact of the delays on the BAE Systems contract price and in-service dates is currently the subject of discussions with the company which are commercial in confidence and I am therefore withholding this information in accordance with Exemption 7a of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Brigade of Guards

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to merge the regiments of the Brigade of Guards; and if he will make a statement; [201540]

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. [201485]

Mr. Hoon: I refer my hon. Friends to the statement I made on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1195–218W.

British Army Bases

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British Army bases there are in England and Wales. [205914]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and will take a little time to collate. I will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Cape Wrath Range

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the dates on which the Cape Wrath range has been subject to short notice activation in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* each of the preceding four years; and on which dates no activity took place at the range. [200921]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* No formal system is in place to record Short Notice Activations. A comparison between the Cape Wrath Range Notifications issued by Flag Officer Scotland Northern England and Northern Ireland (FOSNNI)

and the local records at the Cape Wrath Range has identified just one such activation since 2000. This is as far back as FOSNNI's records go.

The occasion identified in the FOSNNI records occurred in September 2004, when FOSNNI received and approved a request to allow the aerial bombardment of Garvie Island during the week commencing 13 September.

Although bombardment of Garvie Island only took place on 14–15 September 2004, military activity did continue on the Range throughout the period covered by the Short Notice Activation.

Challenger Tank (Chain Gun)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what circumstances led to the recent issue of instructions about the application of the safety catch to the chain gun, as fitted to the Challenger tank; [204946]

(2) under what circumstances army personnel have been ordered *(a)* not to apply and *(b)* to apply the safety catch to the chain gun, as fitted to the Challenger tank. [204947]

Mr. Ingram: The applied safety lever on the chain gun, which is mounted in the turret of the Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank, is redundant by design and incapable of operation by the crew. It has never formed part of the crew safety drills, which are designed to compensate for this. Following an undemanded firing incident in Iraq in April 2003, a review of the chain gun firing drills on Challenger 2 was carried out and a change made to further reduce the possibility of the vehicle commander inadvertently firing the gun.

The armament selector switch remains the primary safety device and the chain gun is safe to use provided operational safety instructions and drills are followed.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action has been taken to rectify problems associated with the chain gun as fitted to the Challenger Tank. [204948]

Mr. Ingram: A single case of undemanded firing of the chain gun on Challenger 2 occurred in Iraq in April 2003. There were no injuries as a result of the incident and investigations revealed that it resulted from a short circuit in the firing system. A modification has subsequently been designed and manufactured, which has now completed trials by the Design Authority, BAE Land Systems (formerly Alvis Vickers Ltd.). The modification is due to be considered for acceptance before Christmas and, subject to acceptance, will proceed to implementation.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents have been reported of the jamming of the chain gun as fitted to the Challenger Tank, in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* elsewhere, with particular reference to instances of the gun being fired without command; and what procedure is followed when an incident occurs. [204975]

Mr. Ingram: There have been four reported cases of jamming of the chain gun on Challenger 2 in Iraq and 51 in total since its introduction into service. Jamming/stoppages may occur during normal operation of the chain gun, as they do on all machine guns, and are not linked to undemanded firing, of which there has only been one reported incident. In the event of a jam or stoppage in the chain gun, Challenger 2 crews follow an established drill to clear the problem.

Correspondence

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Minister of State for the Armed Forces will reply to the letters to him from the hon. Member for Vale of York, of 17 May, 6 July and 28 September, regarding the number of departmental personnel in the Vale of York. [201908]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on 10 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 126W and 25 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1614W.

The Department is collating from records held at local level, although the information is not currently held in the format requested.

Deepcut

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* the terms of reference and *(b)* scope of the further review into the Deepcut allegations announced on 30 November are; who will lead the review; and if he will make a statement. [205371]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my written ministerial statement on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 132WS.

Dentistry

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average cost per person for emergency dental provision in the UK for dependents of military personnel was in the last period for which figures are available. [206703]

Mr. Caplin: The Defence Dental Agency (DDA) is not responsible for providing emergency dental provision in the United Kingdom for dependants of military personnel, as provision of that service falls to the NHS, rather than the Ministry of Defence.

There is therefore no cost to the MOD for such treatment.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206675]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Projects

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all *(a)* category A, *(b)* category B and *(c)* category C projects of his Department that have

received (i) Initial Gate and (ii) Main Gate approval since 31 March 1997; and when approval was achieved in each case. [199829]

Mr. Ingram: The following table provides details of Initial Gate and Main Gate approvals given by the Investment Approvals Board. The information covers all current Category A, B and C equipment projects that have had either Initial Gate or Main Gate approval but which had not achieved In Service Date (ISD) as of 1 November 2004. The table shows original approval dates only and does not include any subsequent re-approvals. Before April 2002, approval for non-equipment projects was delegated to a number of different organisations within the Department. As records are not held centrally, information for non-equipment projects approved before that date could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Cat	*Project*	*Date approved*
	Non-equipment approvals for current post-initial gate/pre-main gate Cat A-C projects	
A	Project Aphrodite—Cyprus PFI project	May 2002
A	Inner London Barracks	August 2002
A	Defence Training Review	August 2002
A	Defence Housing Executive—Prime Contract	October 2002
A	Corsham Development Project	October 2002
A	Interim Storage Of Laid-Up Submarines	December 2002
A	Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (Formerly Surgeon General's Information Strategy (SGIS)	January 2003
A	Whole Fleet Management	March 2003
A	Network Integration Test and Experimental Capability (Formerly Experimental Network Integration Facility)	July 2003
A	Future Defence Supply Chain Initiative (Formerly PDCSI)	August 2003
A	Material Flow—Management of Material in Transit	November 2003
A	Project PRIME (Portsmouth Regeneration and Investment in the Maritime Estate)	March 2004
A	Human Resources Service Delivery Organisation (Formerly Future Civilian HR (FCHR))	April 2004
A	MOD Estates London	June 2004
A	D154 Project Devonport	July 2004
B	Defence Academy Shrivenham	July 2004
B	Air Movements Operation	August 2004
B	Defence Travel Modernisation	November 2004
C	Land Digitisation Integration	March 2002
C	Defence Estates IS (Formerly Project Alexander Information System)	March 2003
C	DCS A End to End Service Management System	May 2003
C	Future Pay Project	June 2003
	Non-equipment approvals for main gate Cat A-C projects	
A	White Fleet PFI	October 2000
A	Single Living Accommodation	September 2002
A	Digitisation of the Battlespace (Land)—Com BAT, Infra and Platform	September 2002
A	Otterburn Training Area	November 2002
A	Project Aquatrine—Water and Wastewater Services PFI	December 2002
A	Hayes Record Office	January 2003
A	SSN Berthing HMNB Clyde	March 2003
A	Defence Estates Regional Prime Contracting—Scotland	March 2003
A	Project NEPTUNE	March 2003
A	Defence Information Infrastructure (Army) (Formerly Army Information Infrastructure (All)	March 2003
A	Defence Information Infrastructure (Head Office)	July 2003
A	Defence Information Infrastructure (Fleet First)	August 2003
A	Catterick Garrison SDR Project—Gaza/Megiddo Lines	October 2003
A	DLO BCP Defence Electronic Commerce Service—E-Catalogues	December 2003
A	Logistics Information Technology System—Delamination for DII/F	February 2004
A	Defence Estates Regional Prime Contracting—South West	March 2004
A	Colchester Garrison	June 2004
A	Joint Personnel Administration	July 2004
A	Projects Allenby and Connaught	August 2004
B	Project Armada	February 2003
B	Defence Resource Management Programme (incorporating DRMS)	May 2003
B	Woodbridge	June 2003
B	Contractor Logistics (formerly Contractor Owned Deployed Operations (CONDO)	August 2003
B	Project RD83 Rosyth Dockyard Decommissioning	September 2004
C	Project EXTRACT	May 2000
C	Human Resources Management System	October 2002
C	Ministry of Defence Police—Project CONTACT	March 2003
C	Project SAPPHIRE	June 2003
C	Defence E-Learning Delivery and Management Capability	September 2003
C	Integration Authority/System Integration Architecture	December 2003
C	Interim Alternate HQ	January 2004
C	Future Pay Project	October 2004
A	DLO BCP Defence Electronic Commerce Service—Shared Working Environment	April 2004
	Equipment approvals for current post-initial gate/pre-main gate Cat A-C projects	
A	FUTURE AIRCRAFT CARRIER (CVF)	December 1998
A	WATCHKEEPER	November 1999
A	AVTS	December 2000
A	Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft	December 2000
A	IFPA	May 2001
A	PICASSO	June 2001

Cat	Project	Date approved
A	FIST—Future Integrated Soldier Technology	August 2001
A	ASTUTE Subsequent Procurement	September 2001
A	Battlefield Light Utility Helicopter (BLUH)	December 2001
A	Ground Based Air Defence Phase 1	February 2002
A	FALCON	July 2002
A	Combined Aerial Target Service (CATS)	September 2002
A	Surface Combatant Maritime Rotorcraft (SCMR)	September 2002
A	SAR	March 2003
A	MERLIN CSP	May 2003
A	Advanced Jet Trainer	August 2003
A	FUTURE RAPID EFFECT SYSTEM (FRES)	April 2004
B	UKCEC Frigate and Destroyer programme	May 2000
B	LIMAWS(G)	March 2001
B	Joint Casualty Treatment Ship	December 2001
B	WASP	September 2002
B	JOUST	July 2003
B	United Kingdom Military Flying Training System	September 2003
B	Anti-Structures Munition	April 2004
B	TIEC—Harrier GR9	June 2004
B	TIEC—Tornado GR4	June 2004
B	JETTS	July 2004
C	JACAMAR	November 2000
C	CUTLASS	April 2002
C	ANSON	May 2002
C	Maritime Biological Detection System (MBDS)	September 2002
C	Automated Software Adaptive Radar (ASAR)	October 2002
C	LIMAWS(R)	October 2002
C	MORTAL	November 2002
C	Tactical Beyond Line of Sight	December 2002
C	Dismounted Counter Mine Capability	April 2003
C	ASUW Littoral Defensive Anti Surface Warfare	July 2003
C	Secure Comms in Aircraft	January 2004
C	LINESMAN	April 2004
C	Light Equipment Transporter	May 2004
C	TEMPORARY DEPLOYABLE ACCOMMODATION	May 2004
C	Typhoon LDP	May 2004
	Equipment approvals for current post-main gate/pre-ISD Cat A-C projects	
A	Swiftsure and Trafalgar Class Update (Final Phase)	January 1994
A	Sting Ray Life Extension and Capability Upgrade	May 1995
A	Brimstone	March 1996
A	NIMROD MRA4	July 1996
A	ASTUTE	March 1997
A	Airborne Stand Off Radar (ASTOR)	June 1999
A	A400M	May 2000
A	BEYOND VISUAL RANGE AIR TO AIR MISSILE	May 2000
A	T45 DESTROYER	July 2000
A	Typhoon ASTA	October 2000
A	Future Joint Combat Aircraft	January 2001
A	SUPPORT VEHICLE	November 2001
A	SKYNET 5	February 2002
A	Next Generation Light Anti-Armour Weapon	May 2002
A	CIP—ComBAT, DBL Infrastructure, Platform EISA	October 2002
A	Apache BOWMAN Connectivity	March 2003
A	C Vehicle Capability—PFI	December 2003
A	M-TADS	September 2004
B	Seawolf MLU	May 1999
B	RNJTIDS STDL	September 1999
B	Seawolf Block 2	February 2000
B	LANDING SHIP DOCK (AUXILIARY)	October 2000
B	CORMORANT	November 2000
B	Sonar 2087 DMS	January 2001
B	TROJAN and TITAN	January 2001
B	SSTD	January 2001
B	Puma HUMS	May 2001
B	Sea King HUMS	May 2001
B	Lynx HUMS	May 2001
B	BATTLE GROUP THERMAL IMAGING	June 2001
B	Wheeled Tankers	June 2001
B	Terrier	July 2002
B	Light Forces Anti-Tank Guided Weapon	January 2003
B	Defence HF Communications Service	March 2003
B	Precision Guided Bomb	June 2003
B	PANTHER Command and Liaison Vehicle (CLV)	July 2003
B	GMLRS	July 2003
B	SOOTHSAYER	August 2003
B	Naval EHF/SHF Satellite Communications Terminals	September 2003
C	Saturn for Lynx Mk8	January 1998

Cat	Project	Date approved
C	Ptarmigan Digital Gateway	June 1998
C	SAWCS	September 1998
C	SSNCESM Eddystone	November 1999
C	Vanguard SSIP—Signature	May 2000
C	4.5KW GEN SET	May 2000
C	Lightweight Chemical Agent Detector(LCAD)	December 2000
C	TSS for SP HVM	February 2001
C	SIFF for HVM	April 2001
C	FC BISA	May 2002
C	FFCS	November 2002
C	AH Air Manoeuvre CTS	December 2002
C	CIS into CAST	April 2003
C	SRS(A)929 8.33 KHz programme	August 2003
C	CSIS Special Projects	September 2003
C	TLAM Block IV Weapon System	February 2004
C	General Service Respirator (GSR)	October 2004

Electoral Registration

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what instructions he has given to his Department to ensure all service personnel are included on the voters' register. [206697]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence is working closely with the Electoral Commission to improve awareness in the Service Community of the options to register to vote. An internal information campaign will begin early next year to coincide with the publication of a Defence Council Instruction explaining those options.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206734]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence's policy on the storage and deletion of e-mails is that e-mails which need to be kept should be saved into departmental records systems. Those emails which do not need to be kept should be disposed of regularly to avoid overloading mailboxes. This policy has not changed in the last 12 months.

European Rapid Reaction Force

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on British military involvement in the European Rapid Reaction Force. [205918]

Mr. Ingram: There is no standing European Rapid Reaction Force. What has sometimes been referred to as a "European Rapid Reaction Force" is in fact a catalogue of forces which member states could make available to the EU should they choose to participate in any particular EU-led operation. The United Kingdom currently declares to this catalogue up to 12,500 troops, 18 warships and 72 combat aircraft.

However a pool of capability to respond very rapidly, within 10–15 days, to escalating crises is being established by the EU Battlegroups initiative. Member states have committed a total of 13 national and multinational Battlegroups (which will involve some of the national capabilities declared to the catalogue). During the Initial Operating Capability period (2005–06), the EU will be able to deploy one Battlegroup at any one time. During the Full Operating Capability period (from 2007), the EU aims to be able to deploy two Battlegroups concurrently.

The UK has committed one national Battlegroup and one multinational (with the Netherlands based on long-standing cooperation in the UK/Dutch Amphibious Force). We expect to hold one of these Battlegroups on standby for six months in any two-year period. The national Battlegroup will be on standby during the first six-month rotation (Jan-Jun 2005). The multinational Battlegroup will be available after 2007. To meet these commitments, UK troops will be drawn from the Joint Rapid Reaction Force as appropriate at the time.

Any decision to commit UK troops and assets to any EU-led operation (including any EU Battlegroup operation) rests entirely with the Government and is made on a voluntary, case-by-case basis, as for NATO and UN operations. Moreover, an EU operation can only be launched with the unanimous consent of the 25 member states.

Flight ZD576

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether evidence relating to the crash of Flight ZD576 in June 1994 has been destroyed since the crash happened. [205236]

Mr. Ingram: No evidence has been destroyed. The right hon. Member is aware that the wreckage of ZD576 has been retained in secure storage at RNAY Fleetlands; and that all documentation pertaining to the incident held by the central Secretariat is being retained in accordance with the commitment made to the House of Commons by the then Minister for the armed forces.

Future Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what consultations have taken place between the Alliance to build the Future Aircraft Carriers in UK shipyards; when these consultations began; and what role was played in these consultations by the Department's commercial partners in the Alliance; [204831]

(2) whether his Department has placed restrictions on its commercial partners in the Alliance to build the Future Aircraft Carriers on discussing the project with UK shipyards. [204830]

Mr. Ingram: During the competitive stages of the Assessment Phase (November 1999 to December 2002) separately both BAE Systems and Thales UK produced shipbuild strategies in consultation with United Kingdom shipyards as part of their proposals. Since January 2003, and the announcement of the Alliance approach to delivering the Future Aircraft Carriers (CVF), the companies have issued formal requests for information to UK shipyards in mid-2003 and early-2004. These have been supported by regular interactions between the companies and the shipyards. No restrictions have been placed on the commercial partners in these discussions provided the carriers are acquired in accordance with the defence industrial policy for Royal Navy warships to be built in UK shipyards.

Future Surface Combatant

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence following the decision to cancel the Future Surface Combatant; what plans he has to procure a variant of the Type 45 Destroyer; how many ships he expects to be involved; what he estimates the cost to be; and when he expects these vessels to enter service. [203293]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Surface Combatant (FSC) programme has not been cancelled. However, the project is being reviewed together with all other military maritime programmes as part of the Maritime Coherence study, and a range of options is being considered. The project is still in its concept phase and no decision has yet been taken about the time scale for delivering the FSC capability, nor about the platform solution.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there remains a requirement for the Future Surface Combatant. [203366]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Surface Combatant (FSC) will be needed to replace the capability currently provided by the Type 22 and Type 23 Frigates as they progressively leave service from around the middle of the next decade. The FSC project is being reviewed together with all other military maritime programmes as part of the Maritime Coherence study, and a range of options is being considered. The project is still in its concept phase and no decision has yet been taken about the timescale for delivering the FSC capability, nor about the platform solution.

Gulf War Syndrome

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the report of the independent public inquiry into Gulf War Syndrome chaired by Lord Lloyd; and if he will make a statement. [205003]

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the findings of the Lord Lloyd Inquiry into Gulf War illnesses, with particular reference to his response to the recommendations. [205699]

Mr. Caplin: I refer my hon. Friend and the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 911W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Cunningham, South (Mr. Donohoe).

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will accept *(a)* Gulf war syndrome and *(b)* acute vaccination reaction as being attributable to service when applications are made for a war pension. [205698]

Mr. Caplin: Under the terms of the War Pensions Scheme, claimed disablements are accepted in terms of the underlying medically recognised pathological process. "Gulf War Syndrome" is not medically recognised and we cannot therefore use the term.

The fact that there is, at present, no proper basis for recognising "Gulf war syndrome" as a diagnostic label does not prevent payment of compensation for symptoms claimed under that term or more generally as "Gulf illness". Any ill-defined symptoms that cannot be attributed to a specific recognised diagnosis are considered under the recognised diagnostic label "signs, symptoms and ill-defined conditions", and awards will be made where they are found to be disabling and due to service.

The term "acute vaccine reaction" is a discrete recognised diagnostic label and awards can be made under the War Pension Scheme where such a diagnosis is agreed and found to be due to service.

Hawk Jet

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Hawk 128 jets have been ordered in the first tranche of the procurement process. [205943]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* Subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the design and development phase, we plan to seek approval to place a production contract for an initial order of at least 20 aircraft. Final numbers will be known by the main investment decision point, planned for spring 2006.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the export potential of the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer. [204835]

Mr. Ingram: The Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer is a world-class aircraft with strong export potential. Export orders for Hawk variants have been won in a number of countries, and the overseas market for advanced jet trainers remains strong. The MoD's Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) is fully involved in supporting UK industry's efforts to achieve further sales.

Indonesia (Defence Sales)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on what date his Department was informed of the decision by Alvis to use *(a)* PT Truba and *(b)* PTSK as agents in connection with the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia; [205694]

(2) on what date his Department was informed of the decision by BAE Systems to use PTSK as its agent in connection with the sale of Hawk jets to Indonesia; [205695]

(3) on what date his Department was informed of the decision by Alvis Plc to conclude a consultancy agreement with Global Select; [205696]

(4) what discussions the Defence Export Services Organisation had with Alvis on commission payments in connection with the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia; [205697]

(5) what services the UK Government provided on the 1995 contract for the supply of *(a)* Scorpion and *(b)* Stormer vehicles to Indonesia. [205700]

Mr. Ingram: No record has been found relating to the use of agents, or the payment of commissions, in connection with the sale to Indonesia by Alvis plc of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles, or by BAE Systems of the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer. No information has been traced regarding Alvis concluding a consultancy agreement. Advice given at that time by the Defence Export Services Organisation to support the companies' bids to supply equipment to Indonesia, comprised the normal business support, including advice on marketing, given to any company seeking to undertake legitimate defence exports.

Iraq

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list NATO countries which have *(a)* agreed to train security forces in Iraq and *(b)* committed troops and personnel to conduct training; and if he will make a statement. [204384]

Mr. Hoon: At the ministerial meeting in Brussels on 9 December, Foreign Ministers of the 26 NATO countries agreed to move ahead with expanding NATO's role in Iraq. 23 NATO countries have agreed to provide support to the NATO Training Mission-Iraq by providing personnel and equipment to train the Iraqi Security Forces in and outside Iraq. Of these23, fifteen countries have agreed to deploy forces within Iraq. These are Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy, in respect of the departmental minute dated 15 December concerning the gifting of military equipment to the Iraqi Interim Government, to withdraw the gift of *(a)* the 438 underslung grenade launchers for AK47s, *(b)* 18,400 UGL rounds, *(c)* 850,000 rounds of 9mm ammunition and *(d)* 5,666 9mm pistols. [206861]

Mr. Hoon: I do not intend to withdraw the gifting of underslung grenade launchers, ammunition or pistols to the Iraqi Interim Government. The UK Government are committed to helping the Iraqi police, National Guard and Department of Border Enforcement to provide the protection and security that the Iraqi people deserve. The gifting of this equipment is a key element in achieving this, which in turn will reduce the burden on our own troops and eventually facilitate our withdrawal from Iraq.

Nuclear Tests Veterans

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to offer a substantive response to Letters before Action received from legal representatives acting on behalf of members of the British Nuclear Tests Veterans' Association. [205945]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* A Letter of Claim, as opposed to a Letter Before Action, was sent to the Ministry of Defence on 15 November 2004, but never received. However, solicitors acting for the British Nuclear Test Veterans have now provided a copy, which will be replied to within the three months allowed under the Civil Procedure Rules or at a date agreed between the parties.

Operative Activities (Expenditure)

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Personnel Director, *(b)* Pay and Personnel Agency, *(c)* Defence Vetting Agency, *(d)* Defence Export Services Organisation, *(e)* Finance Director, *(f)* Defence Analytical Services Agency, *(g)* Defence Bills Agency, *(h)* Chief Constable Ministry of Defence Police and *(i)* Chief Scientific Adviser; [205925]

(2) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Defence Academy, *(b)* Defence Estates, *(c)* Deputy Chief Defence Staff (Commitments), *(d)* Director Special Forces, *(e)* Defence Geographic and Imaging Intelligence Agency, *(f)* Veterans Agency, *(g)* Deputy Chief Defence Staff (Personnel), *(h)* Defence Dental Agency and *(i)* Defence Housing Executive management groups; [205426]

(3) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency, *(b)* Policy Director, *(c)* Deputy Chief Defence Staff (Equipment Capability), *(d)* Chief of Defence Intelligence, *(e)* Defence Intelligence and Security Centre, *(f)* Defence Medical Services Department and *(g)* Defence Medical Education and Training Agency management groups; [205427]

(4) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003–04 was by the *(a)* Internal Costs, *(b)* Programme Account and *(c)* Nuclear management groups; [205428]

(5) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003–04 was by the *(a)* Deputy Chief of Defence Logistics, *(b)* Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency, *(c)* Defence Supply Chain HQ, *(d)* Defence Storage and Distribution Agency and *(e)* British Forces Post Office management groups; [205429]

(6) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Flag Officer Training and Recruiting, *(b)* HQ and *(c)* Naval Secretary management groups; [205430]

(7) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003–04 was by the *(a)* Army Personnel Centre, *(b)* Army Training and Recruiting Agency, *(c)* Service Children's Education and *(d)* Primary Health Care management groups; [205431]

(8) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Adjutant General, *(b)* Army Programme, *(c)* General Staff, *(d)* Queen Victoria School and *(e)* Duke of York Royal Military School management groups; [205432]

(9) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Personnel Management Agency, *(b)* Core HQ and *(c)* Training Group Defence Agency management groups; [205433]

(10) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Fleet, *(b)* General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland), *(c)* Command Field Army, *(d)* Joint Helicopter Command, *(e)* Land Support and *(f)* Command Regional Forces management groups; [205435]

(11) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* 1 Group, *(b)* 2 Group, *(c)* 3 Group and *(d)* Deputy Commander-in-Chief management groups; [205436]

(12) what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003/04 was by the *(a)* Defence Fuels Group, *(b)* Defence Communication Services Agency, *(c)* DG Equipment Support (Land), *(d)* DG Equipment Support (Air) and *(e)* Defence Transport and Movements Agency management groups. [205438]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Overseas Travel

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206659]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Therefore, the terms of Exemption 9 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information apply.

Porton Down

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what preparations are being made to provide information after 1 January 2005 under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to former service personnel about experiments in which they took part at the chemical defence establishment, Porton Down. [205036]

Mr. Caplin: A system is in place to deal specifically with inquiries relating to the Porton Down Service Volunteer Programme. Therefore, no extra preparations for the release of information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act are necessary.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department will pay compensation to the family of Ronald Maddison who died at the chemical defence establishment, Porton Down; and if his Department will issue an apology to the family. [205183]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement I made today.

Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received on the future of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers; and if he will make a statement. [204027]

Mr. Ingram: My hon. Friend the Member for Rochdale (Mrs. Fitzsimons) met my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence, (Mr. Hoon) on 6 December to lobby on behalf of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Additionally, in recent months the Secretary of State has received a series of letters from other hon. Members related to the future of this Regiment.

I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made to the House on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1195, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence about the future structure of the Army.

Satanism

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the compatibility of Satanism with the military ethos; and if he will make a statement. [205536]

Mr. Caplin: No assessment has been made of the compatibility of satanism with the military ethos. The beliefs of armed forces personnel are regarded as private.

Territorial Army

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the establishment of the Territorial Army have *(a)* received statutory notice of compulsory mobilisation and *(b)* been accepted into mobilised service for operations overseas since 1998, broken down by cap badge. [205448]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: The information requested is not held by cap badge and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. In respect of Territorial Army (TA) personnel as a whole, since 1998, 18,979 statutory notices of compulsory mobilization have been issued and there have been 14,813 acceptances into mobilized service in support of operations overseas. This represents approximately 45 per cent. and 35 per cent. respectively of the current TA establishment of 41, 820. However, it should be

borne in mind that a small number of personnel have been accepted into mobilized service on more than one occasion during the period.

Theft

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206394]

Mr. Caplin: The requested information, as held centrally by the Ministry of Defence on civil servants for the full years 1997–2003, is summarised in the following table:

	Faced proceedings as a result of allegations of theft	*Charged with theft*	*Dismissed following theft allegations*
1997	18	18	12
1998	10	10	9
1999	7	7	3
2000	5	5	4
2001	1	1	1
2002	4	4	2
2003	2	2	0

These data all relate to internal MOD proceedings for theft under the definition used in the MOD Civilian Personnel Manuals.

Travel Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the Department spent on first class travel in each year since 1997. [206559]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Therefore, the terms of Exemption 9 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information apply.

Troop Deployment (Northern Ireland)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many troops are stationed in Northern Ireland. [205915]

Mr. Ingram: The number of armed forces personnel (Army, Navy and RAF), under the command of the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland (GOC NI), stationed in Northern Ireland at 30 November 2004 is 11,000.

The GOC NI also has under his command troops that are rear based in Great Britain that can be called forward to the Province as and when required. In addition other troops can be made available to the GOC NI from Land Command if required for example during the marching season.

Watchkeeper Vehicle

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of the Watchkeeper unmanned aerial vehicle in the development of network-enabled capability. [205941]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* A description of Network Enabled Capability, and Watchkeeper's role in it, is set out on pages 5 and 6 of Delivering Security in a Changing World(Future Capabilities (Cm 6269). The Watchkeeper capability will provide UK commanders with accurate, timely and high quality information, including imagery. Watchkeeper will be fully integrated into the wider command and control digitised network, passing data quickly to those who need it.

Young Military Personnel

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people aged under 18 years have died while on service and in training in each of the armed forces in the last 10 years; and if he will list the causes of death in each case. [205683]

Mr. Caplin: 28 regular service personnel under the age of 18 have died between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 2003. Of these six were trained service personnel and 22 were untrained service personnel. A breakdown in the causes of these deaths by service is provided at tables A and B.

Table A: Deaths in trained regular service personnel under 18 years of age 1994 to 2003

Cause of death	*Naval services*	*Army*	*RAF*	*Total*
Diseases-related conditions	—	—	—	—
Injury or poisoning-related conditions				
On-duty				
Falls	1	—	—	1
Off-duty				
Poisoning	1	1	—	2
Road traffic accident	1	1	—	2
Unknown on/off-duty				
Suicide/open verdict death[1]	—	1	—	1
All trained deaths	3	3	0	6

Table B: Deaths in untrained regular service personnel under 18 years of age, 1994 to 2003

Cause of death	*Naval services*	*Army*	*RAF*	*Total*
Diseases-related conditions				
Cancer	—	1	—	1
Disease of the circulatory system	—	2	—	2
Injury or poisoning-related conditions				
On-Duty				
Falls	—	1	—	1
Guns shot wound[2]	1	1	—	2
Road traffic accident	—	1	—	1
Suicide/open verdict death[1]	—	2	—	2
Off-duty				
Drowning or submersion	1	1	—	2
Falls	—	1	—	1
Road traffic accident	—	6	1	7
Unknown on/off-Duty				
Suicide/open verdict death[1]	—	1	—	1
Information on cause not yet known	—	2	—	2
All untrained deaths	2	19	1	22

[1] Suicide and open verdict deaths recorded by a coroner (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or the Procurator Fiscal (Scotland).
[2] Includes one Army death awaiting a coroner verdict.

TREASURY

Aimee Tombs

Mr. Luff: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the repayment of tax credit due to Aimee Tombs whose national insurance number has been communicated to his Department will be made. [204650]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue wrote to the hon. Member about this on 9 December 2004.

Back-to-work Bonuses

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* targets he has set and *(b)* estimates he has made for the number of (i) lone parents and (ii) those on incapacity benefits who may return to work as a result of back to work bonuses being extended for a year, as announced in the pre-Budget report. [206804]

Mr. Timms: There are no targets set, or current estimates for, the number of (i) lone parents or (ii) those on incapacity benefits who may return to work as a result of back to work bonuses being extended for a year, as announced in the pre-Budget report.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how may people in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland he estimates will qualify for the extension of back to work bonuses for a year, as announced in the pre-Budget report. [206805]

Mr. Timms: The In-Work Credit, a work incentive payment being piloted for lone parents, is not currently available in the constituency of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland.

Tees Valley is one of the 14 Jobcentre Plus Districts which will be covered by the extension of the Pathways to Work pilots announced in the 2004 PBR. Pathways to Work pilots offer a range of additional support for incapacity benefits recipients including a 52-week Return to Work Credit. In Tees Valley there were around 12,000 new/repeat IB starts in the year to the end of May 2004 (the latest month for which we have complete benefits data), and approximately 41,000 existing recipients, all of whom can access the RTWC.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effects on Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituents of the pre-Budget announcements on *(a)* additional expenditure on children and childcare and *(b)* the 3,500 Sure Start child centres to be established by 2010. [206812]

Mr. Timms: "Choice for parents, the best start for children: a 10 year strategy for childcare" published alongside the pre-Budget report this year announced additional expenditure of £600 million by 2007–08 to support children and parents. This will benefit families right across the country. The Sure Start Unit will work, in conjunction with stakeholders, to determine where and how the details of the pre-Budget report announcements will be implemented.

Child Tax Credit

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his estimate is of the number of families living in the London Borough of Wandsworth who are entitled to the child tax credit; and if he will make a statement; [205917]

(2) how many families living in the London Borough of Wandsworth are in receipt of the working tax credit; and if he will make a statement. [205920]

Dawn Primarolo: The numbers in receipt of tax credits are shown in "Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics, Geographical Analyses January 2004". This appears on the Inland Revenue web site, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. Figures for December 2004 will be published on 23 December.

No estimates are available of the number of families in Wandsworth eligible for these tax credits.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205759]

Mr. Timms: The information is not held in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Customs and Excise

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* Customs and Excise officers and *(b)* operational sniffer dogs there have been in the UK in each year since 1997. [204448]

Dawn Primarolo: *(a)* The numbers of staff employed in civil service departments and agencies since 1997, including HM Customs and Excise, are available on the Cabinet Office's "Civil Service Statistics" website at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management information/statistical information/statistics/index.asp and in the annual editions of "Civil Service Statistics'.

(b) The following number of detector dogs were in post each year as follows.

	Number of dogs
31 March 1998	92
31 March 2002	54
31 March 2003	51
31 March 2004	54
10 December 2004	59[1]

[1] Plus a further five in training school.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206432]

Mr. Timms: As at our last billing date of November the Treasury had 336 credit cards for official expenditure. 196 of these accounts are for paying for low value goods and services in HM Treasury and the remaining 140 are used for travel and subsistence expenses incurred while on official business.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the total external spending by his Department on Private Finance Initiative consultants in each of the last two years was; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement; [202496]

(2) what the total external spending by his Department was on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202505]

Mr. Timms: Information is provided below regarding the total external spending by the Chancellor's departments on PFI/PPP consultants for the last two years. It also identifies the number of PFI/PPP consultancy firms that have been used over the same period. In those instances in which this information is not provided it is because data on PFI/PPP consultancy cannot be readily disaggregated from that of other consultancy expenditure, and to do so would involve disproportionate cost.

Provision of the information requested regarding the number of full-time equivalent consultants employed, number of billed consultancy days, and the implied average cost of each PFI/PPP consultant has not been provided in most cases as to do so would entail a disproportionate cost.

HM Treasury

The total spending on external PFI consultants in 2002–03 is £4.059 million and in 2003–04 is £3.932 million. The figures provided include both consultancy on PFI projects and on PFI policy. The Treasury has used three consultancy firms over this period.

Inland Revenue

Inland Revenue expenditure on external PFI consultancy amounts to a total of £1.142 million for the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04. This includes the STEPS PFI contract entered into jointly by the Inland Revenue, HM Customs and Excise, and the Valuation Office Agency. The Inland Revenue used 19 consultancy firms over this period.

Inland Revenue spend on PPP Consultancy for 2002–03 was £62,600 excluding VAT. 0.2 full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period and a total of 45.3 consultancy days billed. The implied average cost was £1,382 per day excluding VAT and two consultancy firms were used over this period. PPP consultancy spend for 2003–04 was £69,800 excluding VAT. 0.2 full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period and a total of 42.2 consultancy days billed. The implied average cost was £1,654 per day excluding VAT and two consultancy firms were used.

HM Customs and Excise

HM Customs and Excise does not separately identify PFI/PPP consultancy from other consultancy expenditure. Identifiable consultancy spend within PFI projects amounted to £2.777 million over the last two financial years. This figure includes consultancy that has been carried out within a PFI project, but that has not necessarily been PFI consultancy. Disaggregating the two elements would incur disproportionate cost. HM Customs and Excise have used 13 consultancy firms within their PFI projects over this period.

Figures for the STEPS PFI contract are reported in the Inland Revenue figures.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205589]

Mr. Timms: The information is not held in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for each Department the numbers of *(a)* consultants and *(b)* temporary staff engaged; and the number of full-time civil servants at (i) 31 March and (ii) 30 September. [206882]

Mr. Timms: Data concerning civil service numbers in general has been published in "Civil Service Statistics". The Current information for 2004 can also be found online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/index.asp. Specific data concerning the number of consultants and temporary staff are not collected centrally, and are a matter for each Department.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205045]

Mr. Timms: The number of staff directly involved in implementing and applying Freedom of Information legislation in HM Treasury has been:

2001: 1 person

2002: 2 people

2003: 1 person

2004: 2 people

and is expected to be:

2005: 3 people

2006: 3 people

From 1 January 2005, it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

Fuel Costs

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will increase the Inland Revenue's approved mileage rates to take into account rising fuel costs. [205926]

John Healey: The Government's statutory, tax free approved mileage rates for cars and motor cycles were determined by considering many factors including: fuel, fuel efficiency, depreciation, repair, maintenance costs, insurance and vehicle excise duty across the spectrum of all makes and models. Fuel prices constitute only one element taken into account in setting the rates, which were set to encourage the use of smaller, more environmentally friendly cars.

Hypothecated Taxation

Sue Doughty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on Government policy towards hypothecation of taxes; and if he will list all current cases of hypothecated taxation. [206773]

Dawn Primarolo: All changes to taxation are set out in the relevant Financial Statement and Budget Reports, which are available in the Library of the House. In some cases, where the Government is raising revenue for a specific purpose, it is appropriate to reinforce the purpose of the tax measure by linking it to the spending which it finances.

Illegal Meat Imports

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what funding was allocated to Customs and Excise in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003 and *(e)* 2004; and how much is budgeted for (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006 for the detection of illegal meat imports; [205974]

(2) what estimate he has made of the proportion of the *(a)* time and *(b)* resources available to Customs and Excise which is spent on the detection of illegal meat imports. [205986]

Dawn Primarolo: No specific funding was allocated prior to April 2003 when Customs took over enforcement responsibility for illegal imports of products of animal origin from countries outside the European Union. Customs have been allocated £4 million; £7 million and £7 million respectively over the three financial years 2003–04 to 2005–06 and this represents the effort expended by Customs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many individuals have been prosecuted for illegally importing meat in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003 and *(e)* January to November 2004. [205975]

Dawn Primarolo: Since HM Customs and Excise assumed responsibility for enforcement responsibility for illegal imports of products of animal origin in April 2003 four people have been prosecuted of smuggling offences under the Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2003 and the Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2004. All of these prosecutions, which took place between January and November 2004, resulted in convictions.

Information on prosecutions by agencies other than Customs is not held centrally.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps have been taken to identify new technology to detect illegal meat imports; [205976]

(2) what funds were allocated to identifying new technology to detect illegal meat imports in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003 and *(e)* 2004; and how much is budgeted for this purpose for (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006; [205977]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of trials of advanced remote detection systems at airports in detecting illegal meats; [205984]

(4) what plans he has to carry out field trials of advanced remote detection systems on air routes which are known to be used by smugglers of illegal meat. [205985]

Dawn Primarolo: Customs already uses existing x-ray technology for illegal meat when appropriate and continually monitors the market place for new technology that could further assist in its law enforcement role. Customs has been involved in a number of trials of equipment designed to aid the detection of illegal imports and smuggled goods of all kinds.

One of those trials involved use of advanced remote detection systems at overseas airports. Customs decided for a number of reasons not to continue with the trials and that it was more practical to install x-ray equipment at specific UK ports and airports to help detect illicit goods including illegal meat. Customs has no plans for further field trials involving advanced remote detection systems.

Customs' funding is not specifically allocated to identification of new technology aimed at the detection of illegal meat imports.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many dogs were employed in detecting illegal meat imports in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003 and *(e)* the months January to November 2004; and how many will be employed in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205978]

Dawn Primarolo: The first two meat detector dogs began operations in September 2002 on a trial basis. Two more meat detector dogs began operations in January 2004 with a further two in March 2004.

Subject to the results of the current training course, there will be 10 meat detector dogs in operational service during February 2005.

Customs regularly reviews the numbers of meat detector dogs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the quantity of meat illegally imported by sea to UK sea ports in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003 and *(e)* January to November 2004; [205979]

(2) what his estimate is of the quantity of illegal meat imported by air to UK airports *(a)* in each calendar year between 2000 and 2003 and *(b)* between January and November 2004. [205987]

Dawn Primarolo: Under the Government's action plans to tackle illegal meat imports, the Veterinary Laboratories Agency were commissioned to produce risk assessments.

These were published on 6 March 2003 ("Risk Assessment for the Import of Meat and Meat Products Contaminated with Foot and Mouth Disease Virus into Great Britain and the Subsequent Exposure of GB Livestock") and 19 July 2004 ("Risk Assessment of the Import of Contaminated Meat and Meat Products into Great Britain and the Subsequent Exposure of GB Livestock").

Copies of both were placed in the House Libraries.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the effectiveness of Customs and Excise's detection of illegal meat is measured; and by whom. [205981]

Dawn Primarolo: Customs' role is to deter and detect illegal imports of meat and other products of animal origin imported from outside the European Union and thereby reduce the risk of disease from such imports. The strategy delivers this aim through:

increasing passengers' awareness of the rules and regulations, encouraging the voluntary surrender of any illegal meat on arrival and discouraging the public from embarking on their journey to the UK with illegal meat in their possession;

anti-smuggling checks to detect illegal imports on the basis of risk assessment and intelligence;

seizing imports surrendered by passengers in the Red Channel or detected in the possession of passengers in the Green Channel;

Refocus our efforts in response to diseases notifications from Defra and the Food Standards Agency.

In the absence of detailed outcomes that Customs believe are the most effective ways of measuring their performance, Customs and Defra have identified a number of areas such as public awareness surveys and benchmarking that could serve as useful performance indicators.

At this early stage, most emphasis is placed on the number of seizures, which are monitored by Customs and Defra and overseen by Departmental Ministers and in progress reports to the Cabinet Committee on illegal imports. However, Customs and Defra recognise the limitations of using such output data in determining overall impact.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what research into available technology for improving the detection of diseased meat at airports his Department has *(a)* conducted and *(b)* evaluated; [205988]

(2) how illegal meat imports seized by Customs and Excise are disposed of. [205982]

Dawn Primarolo: With the exception of those commercial consignments seized by Customs that can be restored on condition that they are re-exported in compliance with Regulation 24 of the Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2004, all illegal meat seized by Customs is sealed and transported under approved conditions to an approved incinerator for disposal without delay. As the Government have concluded that all such seizures should be treated as a potential animal or human health risk. Customs have not conducted or evaluated any studies into detection technology specifically related to diseased meat.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Gale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of Inland Revenue mail is outsourced to a Swedish postal company; and what the average annual value of that contract is. [206707]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has a contract with the carrier, Lynx, who subcontract to Royal Mail, to carry international mail overseas. The value of this contract is approximately £900,000 per annum. It is currently being re-tendered and a new contract is due to be awarded in February 2005.

Mail is collected by Lynx and consolidated (with items from other public and private sector organisations) to maximise volumes and secure competitive prices. It is then despatched by Royal Mail from its Heathrow sorting centre. When the mail arrives in the country of destination it is handled by the relevant national postal authority. From 1 October 2004, under the terms of the current contract, the Revenue has allowed Lynx to monitor the postal market and select the mail issuing authority offering the most economically advantageous delivery route and competitive pricing. This means that during October, for example, 104,217 items of IR international mail were despatched directly by Sweden Post, bearing their indicia, but were still delivered by the relevant national postal authority. Similarly, 24,117 items were sent by Royal Mail. The savings secured by use of Sweden Post are around £5,700. During the same period, 8,731,425 items of IR post (both domestic and international) were sent by Royal Mail. The percentage despatched by Sweden Post is therefore 1.2 per cent.

Miss Begg: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance is issued to Inland Revenue decision-makers on how to interpret the tests for non-recovery in Code of Practice 26 cases; and if he will place in the Library a copy of the guidance. [206254]

Dawn Primarolo: Guidance for staff is contained in the tax credits manual. The Inland Revenue plan to publish the manual on the Department's website early in the New Year (and a copy will also be placed in the Library of the House at that time).

Isle of Wight

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of migration *(a)* to and *(b)* from the Isle of Wight was in the most recent two five-year periods for which information is available, broken down by (i) age, (ii) qualification level and (iii) socio-economic status. [206077]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew Turner, dated 21 December 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your question on the level of migration to and from the Isle of Wight in the most recent two five-year periods for which information is available broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* qualification level and *(c)* socio-economic status.

Migration to and from the Isle of Wight is the sum of migration to and from the rest of the UK (internal migration), and migration to and from areas outside the UK (international migration). Internal migration estimates are available for the Isle of Wight for the two most recent five-year periods. Estimates of international migration are not sufficiently robust for release.

Estimates of Total International Migration are compiled from survey and administrative sources. The low sample sizes in the main source, the International Passenger Survey (IPS), mean that it is not possible to provide reliable estimates of international migration to and from the Isle of Wight for either of the most recent five-year periods. For the ten-year period from 1994 to 2003, the IPS estimates that the Isle of Wight received a total of approximately 4,000 international migrants and a slightly smaller number of international migrants departed. However, these figures should be treated with caution because the sampling errors for these estimates are sufficiently large that the net effect of international migration over this period could have been a small net inflow or a small net outflow.

The attached two tables show the number of internal migrant moves to and from the Isle of Wight from other areas of the UK for the years 1994–1998 and 1999–2003. The tables are broken down by quinary age groups and sex. Details of qualification level and socio-economic status are not collected and are not, therefore, available.

These estimates of internal migration are derived from the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR). The NHSCR is notified when a patient in England and Wales transfers to a new NHS doctor in a different former Health Authority, or Health Board in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Table 1: Movements to and from the Isle of Wight and the rest of the UK during the period 1994–98 by quinary age group

Age	Inflow	Persons Outflow	Balance
All ages	24,589	18,743	5,846
0–4	1,785	1,147	638
5–9	1,641	951	690
10–14	1,338	792	546
15–19	1,507	3,012	-1,505
20–24	2,893	2,980	-87
25–29	2,169	2,106	63
30–34	2,001	1,534	467
35–39	1,660	1,035	625
40–44	1,409	828	581
45–49	1,379	827	552
50–54	1,458	671	787
55–59	1,269	501	768
60–64	1,252	496	756
65–69	997	475	522
70–74	690	434	256
75+	1,141	954	187

Table 2: Movements to and from the Isle of Wight and the rest of the UK during the period 1999–2003: by quinary age group

Age	Inflow	Outflow	Persons Balance
All ages	27,545	19,661	7,884
0–4	1,922	1,084	838
5–9	1,796	945	851
10–14	1,534	919	615
15–19	1,606	3,125	-1,519
20–24	2,843	2,757	86
25–29	2,178	1,948	230
30–34	2,400	1,642	758
35–39	2,262	1,214	1,048
40–44	1,788	996	792
45–49	1,514	807	707
50–54	1,666	863	803
55–59	1,795	725	1,070
60–64	1,452	662	790
65–69	977	538	439
70–74	607	479	128
75+	1,205	957	248

Low-income Households

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in the Coventry area are living in low-income households; and how his Department defines a low-income household. [206379]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

Poverty is about more than low income, it also impacts on the way people live-their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy. In December 2003, we published "Measuring child poverty" which outlines the Government's new measure of child poverty which will be used from 2004–05. Both of these documents are in the Library.

Data for the number of families living in low income households is not available below regional level. Other information regarding low income is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03," a copy of which is in the Library. This publication reports on a range of absolute and relative low-income counts, including the most commonly used threshold of below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income, adjusted for household size.

MPs' Tax Credit Hotline

Mr. Luff: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what training is provided to staff on the MPs' Tax Credit hotline. [204649]

Dawn Primarolo: All staff on the Tax Credits MPs' hotline staff receive:

tax credits technical training

additional training for planned tax credits system releases

telephone techniques training.

In addition, off-line technical specialists are available to support staff on the hotline.

Pre-Budget Report

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was of producing the summary leaflet for the pre-Budget report; what the costs were of distributing it; and if he will list the locations to which it has been circulated for distribution. [206007]

Mr. Timms: The total printing cost for the 2004 pre-Budget report summary leaflets was around £55,000. The total distribution cost was around £85,000. All costs have been met from within the Treasury's departmental expenditure limits. Copies of the 2004 pre-Budget report leaflet were distributed to around 30,000 addresses,

including individuals and public organisations such as libraries, post offices, GP's surgeries, schools and universities.

Private Finance Initiative

David Taylor: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment has been made of the tendering process for private finance initiative contracts. [206116]

Mr. Boateng: The tendering process for private finance initiative contracts follows EU procurement rules. Supplemental to this, the Treasury has issued a third updated version of guidance on standard contracts, "Standardisation of PFI Contracts: Version 3" ("SoPCS") in April 2004, and detailed guidance outlining how procuring authorities should ensure value for money throughout the procurement process in August 2004.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the estimated £34 to £49 million in overpayments for tax credits in 2003–04, referred to in the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts 2003–04, has been successfully recovered; and if he will make a statement. [205935]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* For claimants still receiving tax credits, recovery is generally an automatic process, by deduction from the ongoing award. The amount recovered from a family by any date will depend on the amount and frequency of their payments and is not continuously monitored. Statistics on overpayments will be published in Spring 2005.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit computer records are awaiting reconciliation of payments made against payments authorised in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year; and if he will make a statement. [205937]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* For 2003–04,1 refer my right hon. Friend to paragraph 2.17 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General attached to the Inland Revenue Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2004.

For 2004–05, a new daily reconciliation was successfully implemented by August 2004. Reconciliation for this year is planned for completion by the end of April 2005.

Miss Begg: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how long on average it took the Inland Revenue to respond to a request not to recover a tax credit overpayment *(a)* as a first tier complaint and *(b)* as a second tier complaint in the last period for which information is available. [206256]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue aims to deal with letters of complaint from Members of Parliament and members of the public promptly. It aims to deal with 80 per cent. of letters within 15 working days. The Tax Credit Office is on course to achieve this for 2004–05. They do not keep separate figures for complaints involving a disputed overpayment.

Miss Begg: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in cases where a tax credit overpayment has not been written off, the Inland Revenue writes to the claimant and invites them to make representations as to whether the overpayment should be written off under the tests set out in Code of Practice 26. [206274]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue sends customers a decision notice whenever it makes or amends a tax credit award. The notes accompanying the notice refer customers to the Department's Code of Practice 26, What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?, which explains its approach to recovering overpayments, including the circumstances in which it will write them off.

Often where there is a tax credit overpayment this is because of a change in the customer's income or circumstances which was not notified immediately to the Inland Revenue. It would not be appropriate to invite customers to make representations for their overpayment to be written off in these circumstances.

Working Tax Credit

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of working tax credit cases have been overpaid since 1 April. [205285]

Dawn Primarolo: Payments made since 6 April 2004 are provisional and any overpayments of 2004–05 awards will not be identified until those awards are finalised after April 2005.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48-hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204169]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* Departmental policies take full account of the Working Time Regulations and this is reflected in the work-life balance statement on our public website (www.hm-treasury.gov.uk). The Treasury has rigorous procedures for recording hours worked by staff. 19 officials working in ministerial private offices recorded working in excess of 48-hours in at least one weekly period in the last 12 months, this represents 51 per cent. of officials working in ministerial private offices.

"The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out."

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on economic restructuring in Afghanistan. [205584]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Since the end of conflict in 2001, the Government of Afghanistan has achieved important progress on economic and structural reforms. It has made a concerted effort in strengthening strategic planning and policy implementation around the national budget process, which is currently on its third cycle. It has embarked on a programme to rebuild fiscal functions of the state, including strengthening of domestic revenue policy and administration. A new currency (the Afghani) was introduced soon after the end of conflict, which the Government have managed well both in terms of the logistical challenges of replacing banknotes and economic challenges of maintaining financial stability.

The Government have also taken steps to promote private sector development. A draft private investment law is expected to be promulgated shortly, a legal framework for extractive industries is being established and state owned enterprises are being restructured and/or privatised. In addition commercial banking legislation has been adopted and the regulatory framework for the financial sector strengthened.

These are all important achievements in establishing an enabling environment and strengthening economic management for growth and poverty reduction, but there are important challenges ahead, not least the maintenance of security and political stability across the country to enable a strengthened relationship between central and provincial government.

In addition there are challenges in terms of strengthening human and institutional capacity to implement economic and structural reforms. The UK Government are playing a significant role in this area through provision of technical assistance with three year-projects to rehabilitate the Customs, Revenue and Budget departments within the Ministry of Finance. These include support for departmental restructuring and transfer of skills and capacity building in human resources, training, ethics and policymaking. DFID complements this with financial support to the Afghanistan Budget managed by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund in order to encourage a gradual move away from dependence on external aid as the economy picks up and capacity increases for raising domestic revenue.

Aid Delivery

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what training his Department has provided to partner country staff regarding aid delivery via poverty reduction budget support in the last year. [205878]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID works with other donors to provide training and support to partner country staff at all stages of the Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring and review). As PRBS relies on partner government public financial management systems, training is focussed particularly on these systems.

Where countries are considering new programmes of PRBS, DFID will provide partner country staff with examples of international best practice and discuss alternative forms of aid delivery. As PRBS proposals are prepared, we have detailed dialogue with governments about budget systems, budget allocations and the effectiveness of budget spending. DFID procedures require careful assessment and monitoring of the public—finance management systems, and we aim to conduct these assessments jointly with partner governments.

Where appropriate, we accompany PRBS grants with targeted technical assistance and project support. This can include training or other support on planning, budgeting, procurement and audit. Training is often shared amongst donors participating in multi- donor budget support (MDBS) programmes.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research he has commissioned concerning the effectiveness of aid delivery via *(a)* conventional programmes and projects and *(b)* poverty reduction budget support. [205879]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has commissioned a number of independent evaluations to address the efficient use of aid resources. In 2004–05 DFID commissioned work to assess the effectiveness of harmonisation, a number of country programmes and gender. DFID is also in the process of commissioning evaluations on the effectiveness of aid delivery in the areas of HIV/AIDS, Technical Cooperation and Agricultural Research. Work has been commissioned to look at the effectiveness of global funds and partnerships, and in assessing the effectiveness of the multilateral institutions that the UK supports.

A major joint evaluation of General Budget Support (GBS), led by DFID on behalf of 23 donors and seven partner Governments, will assess to what extent, and under what circumstances and in what contexts, GBS is a relevant, efficient and effective instrument for achieving sustainable impact on poverty reduction and growth. The final findings of the joint evaluation are due to be published in January 2006. DFID has also been involved in a joint evaluation of General Budget Support in Tanzania (1995–2004), using the same framework as is being used for the larger study, which has recently produced its final report.

Aid Priorities

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which countries are classified as priorities for international aid. [206089]

Hilary Benn: DFID is committed to spending 90 per cent. of our budget in the world's poorest countries by 2005–06. This includes spending £1 billion per year in sub-Saharan Africa.

DFID's Public Service Agreement for 2005–08 identifies 16 focus countries in Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone,

South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and nine in Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam). DFID is working with country governments and other donors in these focus countries to reduce poverty using international aid.

In addition, DFID provides aid to countries in Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and across the Middle East and North Africa. Within this group, DFID is currently providing significant support to both Iraq and the Palestinian Authority.

A full breakdown of expenditure across all the countries DFID supports is provided in the recently published Statistics on International Development (2004 Edition), which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Chief Technical Advisers

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many chief technical adviser posts there were in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; and how many such posts have been abolished in the past year. [205880]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID had nine chief technical advisers in 2002–03. No posts were abolished, though internal restructuring saw these posts redefined as heads of profession in 2003. There are 10 heads of profession. The increase in posts arises from these being separate heads of profession for rural livelihoods and environment, a schedule previously covered by the chief national resources technical adviser.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205668]

Hilary Benn: The following projects have been carried out on DFID UK buildings, over the period in question:

1 Palace Street London (leased):

Refurbishment project over the period 2000–01 to 2001–02, total cost £27 million.

20 Victoria Street, London (leased):

Refurbishment of building over the period 2001–02, total cost £1.2 million.

Abercrombie House, East Kilbride (freehold):

Refurbishment project over the period 2002–03 to date, total cost £16 million.

The estimated expenditure for 2005–06 is £300,000, being the balance of the completion of the Abercrombie House refurbishment.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206493]

Hilary Benn: DFID holds the following four UK properties:

1 Palace Street London

Leasehold, net Internal area: 15,910 sq m

20 Victoria Street, London

Leasehold, net Internal area: 1,178 sq m

Abercrombie House, East Kilbride

Freehold, net Internal area: 9,755 sq m

Fair-field Place, East Kilbride (storage space only)

Leasehold, net Internal area: 790 sq m

None of the properties are vacant.

Information on our overseas properties is not readily available and cannot be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how many women there are in senior positions in his Department; [205859]

(2) how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205858]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website and the following addresses:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205042]

Hilary Benn: The numbers of staff employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and other information access issues in DFID in the years in question are as follows:

2001—two staff dealt with Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection Act (DPA) issues, and seven staff with records management (RM) issues;

2002—two staff for FOI/DPA issues, five staff for RM issues;

2003—eight staff for FOI/DPA and RM issues;

2004—eight staff for FOI/DPA and RM issues;

2005—eight staff budgeted for FOI/DPA and RM issues;

2006—eight staff budgeted for FOI/DPA and RM issues.

Beyond those staff directly involved in the ongoing implementation and application of FOI within a Department, it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with FOI issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to FOI requests.

HIV/AIDS

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when his Department will publish a strategy for meeting the needs of HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children in developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [204817]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Taking Action, the UK strategy on AIDS published in July 2004, set out a clear and ambitious agenda for the UK Government to tackle HIV and AIDS in developing countries. The strategy commits the UK Government to ensure that DFID spends at least £150 million over the next three years on programmes to meet the needs of orphans and other children, particularly those in Africa, made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

A focus of the strategy is to ensure that the needs and rights of women, young people—including orphans—and marginalised groups are adequately addressed in the action we take.

The UK's approach is to get behind internationally agreed targets. Hence one of the seven key targets for the UK strategy is to achieve a United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) target:

> National plans in place to meet the needs of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS by 2005.

We have endorsed the UNICEF/UNAIDS Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV and AIDS. We will follow this direction and not publish a separate strategy.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to support community-based organisations providing support for HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children in developing countries. [204818]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID fully recognises the importance of civil society in tackling HIV and AIDS.

NGOs have a vital role to play in meeting the needs of children, and the families that care for them.

In addition to the work of NGOs directly supported by DFID's country offices, we are currently renegotiating Partnership Programme Agreements with key UK organisations such as Voluntary Services Overseas, HelpAge International, the Panos Institute, Save the Children and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, all of whom work with orphans and vulnerable children.

Across all of our Partnership Programme Agreements we will increase their funding by £16 million in 2005—many new agreements will include AIDS-related work as a key objective and some will include work with orphans and vulnerable children.

We will also increase our Civil Society Challenge Fund from £10 million to £14 million next year, and we will continue to encourage proposals from NGOs to support vulnerable groups such as orphans and vulnerable children affected by AIDS.

India (Caste Discrimination)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Department is taking to tackle caste discrimination in India. [205401]

Hilary Benn: DFID seeks to understand and address issues of institutional and individual discrimination against Dalits that result in processes of social exclusion and disadvantage. DFID shares this analysis with development partners and encourages them to address discrimination through their programmes of support to the Government of India and civil society. In particular, DFID seeks to disaggregate data by the government's definition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, to highlight the differences in health, education and other indicators between these Scheduled categories and others. For example, DFID support for the nationwide Sarva Shikshya Abhyan (Education-for-All) and the Reproductive and Child Health programmes utilises such disaggregated data to identify those with the poorest outcomes and ensure that State and District Plans in education and health address the disparities.

DFID is also developing programmes of support through civil society to help realise the rights of marginalised groups, specifically identifying Scheduled Castes or Dalits among these. The Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) programme supports a number of civil society initiatives that address social exclusion in the 100 poorest districts in India (details are available on the PACS website www.empowerpoor.org). DFID is in discussion with several International Non-Governmental Organisations, including the Dalit Solidarity Network, Christian Aid and Action Aid, about support for Scheduled Caste or Dalit organisations that seek to realise the Constitutional commitments intended to address caste discrimination and eliminate its harmful effects.

In line with DFID's India Country Assistance Plan, we also seek to support programmes and organisations that promote the measures listed in the UN Committee for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (August 2002 General Recommendation XXIX on "Descent-Based Discrimination"), recognising Dalits as descent-based communities. DFID recognises the need for increased awareness of the issue across other departments if there is to be consistent help for India to address the problem of caste discrimination systemically.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of post-war aid resources committed to Iraq has been spent to date; and what plans there are for further expenditure. [205515]

Hilary Benn: The UK made a total financial commitment of £544 million to humanitarian and reconstruction work in Iraq for the three years from April 2003 to March 2006. This comprises funding of £422.5 million from DFID (including £38 million as our share of planned EC spending), £30 million from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), £61.5 million from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and £30 million for Ministry of Defence Quick Impact Projects (QIPs).

The UK has disbursed over £324 million: £251 million from DFID, £38 million from the FCO, £20 million on QIPs and £15 million from the GCPP. £220 million is expected to be disbursed over the next 15 months. Full details of DFID's commitments to aid in Iraq can be found at www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/iraq.asp.

IT (Disciplinary Prodedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205814]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In DFID, the following disciplinary cases have occurred due to breach of IT policy since 1997:

	Number of cases	*Action taken*
1997	1	Oral warning issued
1999	1	Oral warning issued
2002	1	Oral warning issued

The above information relates to our UK-based staff only as we do not hold central records of discipline cases for Staff Appointed in Country.

The misuse of IT is identified as possible gross misconduct within our discipline procedures. These are included in DFID's Staff Handbook, a copy of which is made available to all staff.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203909]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203966]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for Chichester to the response given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet (Mr. Miliband), on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column1258–59W.

Tanzania

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of Tanzania, regarding the comments in Amnesty International's recent report Protecting their rights: Rwandese Refugees in the Great Lakes Region concerning the treatment of Rwanda's refugees in Tanzania; and if he will make a statement. [206324]

Hilary Benn: Tanzania hosts approximately 410,000 refugees from the Great Lakes Region in camps, of whom, 183 are of Rwandan origin. The Government of Tanzania has given all Rwandan refugees in the camps permission to remain in Tanzania pending resettlement. The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) is currently surveying the numbers and aspirations of those in refugee settlements. No specific discussions have taken place on Amnesty International's recent report. DFID will continue to monitor the situation closely through UN fora.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Government of Uzbekistan and *(b)* small farmers near Samarkand about property rights in agriculture. [205268]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: From 1998–2002, DFID supported land property issues in Samarkand. The DFID project provided technical assistance and seed capital in support of institutional strengthening of the association of private farmers in Bulungur. That project demonstrated that farmers are able to secure access to lending and markets through better use of property assets.

Following requests from the Governments of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in 2004, DFID started cross border work in the Zarafshan Valley to improve economic growth and reduce poverty. In the Tajik part of Zarafshan, DFID is working with local governments and the United Nations Development Programme to promote the national poverty reduction strategy. Samarkand Oblast, which is the Uzbek part of the Zarafshan Valley, will benefit from this work. This work includes information and legal advice for protection of land ownership and property rights including affordable access to dispute resolution, through Third Party Arbitration Courts (TPAC). This will benefit small-scale private farmers, other poor people and emerging cooperatives.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the extent of the use of child labour in Uzbekistan. [205278]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There is limited data on the issue of labour standards, child labour or forced and bonded labour in all countries of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan. Data from a UNICEF survey suggests that around one quarter of children in Uzbekistan were economically active in 2000. There is little documented evidence on the existence of forced or bonded labour in Uzbekistan. Child labour and child work is concentrated in the agricultural sector, service provision and trade.

DFID supports the work of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which is expanding its activities in Central Asia, through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). IPEC is developing a regional programme to combat child labour with a focus on the worst forms. In Summer 2004, it undertook a series of appraisal missions to central Asia to develop future projects within the regional programme. In Uzbekistan, the ILO, jointly with UNICEF, will undertake research on child labour, in collaboration with the "Social Complex" of the Cabinet of Ministers: an umbrella body that works on social issues across Uzbek ministries.

DFID's policy is to support the reduction of child labour with special emphasis on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and to achieve this within the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in a way which ensures children's survival, meets children's development needs particularly in health and education, ensures children's protection and allows them to participate in decisions that affect their lives. On labour standards more generally, DFID policy emphasises the role that appropriate implementation of core labour standards plays in lifting poor people out of poverty.

PRIME MINISTER

Diplomatic Discussions

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions took place at his recent meeting with Chancellor Schroeder of Germany and the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. [206087]

The Prime Minister: I have regular meetings with Chancellor Schroeder and Prime Minister Berlusconi, particularly in the run up to European Councils. At the most recent meetings we discussed a wide range of issues, including Turkey and other European matters.

Emails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what his Office's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months; [206754]

(2) what his Office's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206755]

The Prime Minister: My office continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

My office keeps records for as long as they are needed for administrative and business purposes. Records of enduring historical value are selected for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of the National Archives, on the basis of guidelines which are published on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Anti-bribery/Corruption Procedures

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the sanctions used by the Export Credits Guarantee Department in the event that a company is convicted of or admits to corrupt activity; and on what basis the Export Credits Guarantee Department applies these sanctions. [202928]

Mr. Alexander: The sanctions set out beneath apply to circumstances of conviction or admission after ECGD has entered into contracts of support; and contracts written on standard forms introduced from September 2000. The details of which sanctions are available may depend upon the facts of individual cases: for instance what pre-contractual representations were made to ECGD.

In outline the principal sanctions are that where ECGD has provided support by way of an insurance policy, ECGD will be entitled to avoid or terminate that policy and recover or seek recompense for any sums paid by it; and where it has guaranteed a bank which is itself innocent of any misrepresentation will have rights to claim from the exporter such amounts as ECGD may have paid to the bank under its guarantee.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205082]

Ms Hewitt: Staff do not record hours spent on specific projects.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205083]

Ms Hewitt: For the past two years the DTI has produced its Christmas card from artwork created by the children of staff attending the DTI Holiday Playscheme. One member of staff has overall responsibility for organising the printing of the card. The time spent is nugatory.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of official Departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205084]

Ms Hewitt: None. The card was produced by the children of DTI staff.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many official Christmas cards were sent out by her Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205087]

Ms Hewitt: Our records show that 3,165 cards were sent in 2003. We have not completed sending cards for 2004.

Coalminers' Compensation Scheme

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations her Department has received on sending information to all claimants under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme about solicitors fees. [204854]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* A number of hon. Members have raised this issue which is being considered and I will write to my hon. Friend when a decision has been made.

E-mail

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for announcements and publications issued by her Department and those public bodies reporting to her. [203685]

Ms Hewitt: DTI has had such a facility on its website for nearly three years, and is continuously developing it in response to public feedback. Currently it is possible to sign up for e-mail notifications of press notices, speeches and "What's New" announcements on the site. We also run a number of electronic newsletters in specific subject areas, to keep stakeholders up-to-date.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the extent to which her Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205555]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA) places a general duty on the DTI to be proactive in promoting race equality and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. This duty also applies to our non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs). The DTI's Race Equality Scheme ensures that our Department's services, schemes and policies meet the needs—as far as possible—of all our stakeholders. This includes undertaking race equality impact assessments for relevant areas, monitoring for any adverse impacts, and publishing the results. Further information on the scheme is available at http://www.dti.gov.uk/race-equality-scheme/index.htm.

The DTI also currently shares a PSA objective with the DWP, which aims to increase the employment rate and significantly reduce the difference between the overall employment rate and the employment rate of ethnic minorities. The latest data for 2004 shows that there has been a significant increase in the employment rate of ethnic minorities and that the employment rate gap is narrowing. DTI has contributed to this outcome through a number of policy initiatives, including joint working across Whitehall on the Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market Task force. This PSA is measured quarterly to satisfy Treasury Monitoring requirements.

Further, DTI's internal HR policies and processes are regularly evaluated and are benchmarked externally by Race for Opportunity to measure impact and to ensure they meet the needs of ethnic minority staff.

Export Credits Guarantee Scheme

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many guarantees were issued under the Export Credits Guarantee Scheme in each year between 1997 and 2004; and what the total value of *(a)* guarantees and *(b)* claims was in each period. [203872]

Mr. Alexander: As at 10 October 2004 the number and value of guarantees issued in each financial year since 1 April 1997, together with the total value of claims paid in each year, was as follows:

Financial year	Number of guarantees issued	Business issued £ million	Claims paid £ million
1997–98	241	3,541	165
1998–99	222	3,725	145
1999–2000	226	5,504	291
2000–01	250	5,662	296
2001–02	190	3,298	260
2002–03	150	3,532	254
2003–04	155	2,991	218
2004–05	96	1,664	63
Total	1,530	29,917	1,691

Over the same period total recoveries amounted to £1,618 million.

Fireworks

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what guidance she has issued to retailers about giving fireworks away for free to boost sales of other goods. [205995]

Mr. Sutcliffe: While it would be the preference of the Department that fireworks are not given away by retailers, there is no statute governing the marketing or promotion of fireworks products. No guidance has therefore been issued to retailers that supply fireworks.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what resources will be made available to enforce the regulations contained in the Fireworks Act 2003 in the period before 31 December. [205713]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Most of the measures contained in the Fireworks Regulations 2004, which are made under the Fireworks Act 2003, will be enforced by Trading Standards, the Fire and Rescue Services and Customs and Excise and met by their current resource budgets. However, with regard to regulation 11—information about importation—officials are in discussion with Suffolk county council Trading Standards, who are to play a role in the enforcement of this regulation, about possible extra central funding to maximise the effectiveness of this measure.

With regard to the measures enforced by the Police Service—possession and curfew offences, this is a matter for colleagues in the Home Office.

Fuel Prices

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 704W, on fuel prices, what plans she has to commission research into the impact of increased fuel prices on manufacturing competitiveness in the UK. [206223]

Jacqui Smith: The Department undertakes regular monitoring and analysis of changes in fuel prices and their implications for manufacturing competitiveness in the UK.

Most of the recent increases in oil, gas and electricity prices have occurred as a result of market forces. Any new Government measure which may be expected to have an impact on fuel prices is subject to a standard Regulatory Impact Assessment to assess whether the benefits of a policy justify the costs.

The Department does not have specific plans to commission research into the impacts on manufacturing competitiveness but is working closely with industry and trade associations in these areas to understand the reasons for and implications of fuel price increases.

Hearing Aid Industry

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will report progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the most recent review of the hearing aid industry. [205537]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department has implemented recommendations of the review of the Hearing Aid Council Act 1968, by administrative action where possible. Certain recommendations would require legislation however, for which there are no current plans.

LNG Plant (Nigeria)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions *(a)* officials from the Export Credits Guarantee Department and *(b)* her Department's staff have met Halliburton officials since October 2003, with regard to the bribery allegations relating to the LNG plant at Bonny Island in Nigeria. [202929]

Mr. Alexander: The information requested is as follows:

(*a*) Twice

(*b*) None.

Manufacturing Advisers

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average time spent by advisers from the Manufacturing Advisory Service on in-depth consultancy projects was in the last period for which figures are available. [206005]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) provides for a subsidised in-depth consultancy lasting up to 10 days to address areas for improvement identified in a diagnostic visit by a manufacturing adviser. The actual time spent will depend on the nature of the issues identified and the time and resources committed by the company. Figures for the average time taken are not compiled by MAS.

Maternity Leave (Wandsworth)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many women living in the London borough of Wandsworth have received paid maternity leave in each of the last three years. [201650]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The DTI is unable to provide reliable estimates for the number of women receiving paid maternity leave in the London borough of Wandsworth due to small sample size.

Microsystems National Technology Committee

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will publish the reasons why the Microsystems National Technology Committee rejected the application of EMfab Ltd. for grant funding to help its national roll out of its microsystems project; and if she will publish the evidence on which that decision was based; [204199]

(2) if she will publish the minutes of the Microsystems National Technology Committee at which the decision not to support the EMfab application for grant funding to assist in the national roll-out of its microsystems project was taken. [204200]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* We do not release such information under Exemption 13 (Third Party Commercial Confidences) of the Code of Practice in access to government information.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has made to EU counterparts regarding definitions of acceptable levels of radiation from mobile telephone masts. [206598]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK has accepted the EU Council Recommendation of 12 July 1999 on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields. This EU Recommendation refers to the exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). The Department of Health lead on advice on the exposure guidelines to electromagnetic fields.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of thermal pulsing in radiation from mobile telephone masts. [206599]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The issue of pulsing of mobile phone signals was addressed by the National Radiological Protection Board in the publication "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields". Report of an independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation. Volume 14 No.2 2003. See particularly Chapter 2, page 18 paragraphs 17–19. The publication is available at http://www.nrpb.org/publications/documents_of_nrpb/abstracts/absd14-2.htm. In respect of thermal effects, mobile telecommunications equipment should comply with the exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

Nuclear Industry

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the last nuclear power station was built in the UK. [204827]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Sizewell B Pressurised Water Reactor station which began generating energy in 1995.

Ofgem

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether Ofgem plans to investigate levels of gas prices in autumn 2004. [203566]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Ofgem Gas Price Probe Report, which was published on 5 October, examined gas prices over three distinct periods: wholesale spot prices in October 2003 and August/September 2004, and wholesale forward prices for winter 2004–05. Ofgem is taking the lead on the majority of issues raised, although it is working with a number of others including my Department, the Financial Services Authority and other European organisations. I understand that Ofgem will be writing to the hon. Member with further details shortly.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met representatives of the main energy intensive sectors of industry on 9 December and agreed that officials maintain a close dialogue with them, to get their ideas for improving the operation of the forward market in gas.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will publish her guidance to Ofgem concerning its duty to have regard to sustainable development. [206859]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: It is for Ofgem, which operates under the direction and governance of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (the Authority), to interpret its own statutory duties. This ensures that the principles of independent regulation are not compromised. However, the Government issued social and environmental guidance to the Authority in February 2004. The Authority is required to have regard to the guidance when discharging its statutory functions to which its principal objective and general duties apply.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many written questions for her Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201559]

Ms Hewitt: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 136W.

Radioactive Waste

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the written statement of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 115WS, on intermediate level radioactive waste substitution, if she will *(a)* place in the Library and *(b)* post on her Department's website copies of each of the submissions made to the consultation on substitution; and if she will publish her analysis of the submissions (i) in favour and (ii) against the substitution proposals. [206001]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A summary of the responses to the consultation are published on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-1205.html together with the Statement (which took into account the responses to the consultation) announcing the change to the policy on substitution that was announced in the House on 13 December. A summary of the responses has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

In addition, copies of the non-confidential responses to the consultation on the Proposals for Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste Substitution are available for viewing in the DTI library

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many contract staff have been appointed in regional development agencies to work on export trade promotion and inward investment. [203954]

Jacqui Smith: I understand that the number of permanent staff employed on a contract basis and other staff contracted to work on export trade promotion and inward investment by England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are as follows:

RDA	*Number of permanent staff employed by the RDA*	*Other staff contracted to work on export trade promotion and inward investment*[1]
South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA)	17	11
East Midlands Development Agency (Emda)	15	3
London Development Agency (LDA)	1	0
Northwest Development Agency (NWDA)	16	[2]0
ONE North East	17.5	[2]2
South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)	14	5
Yorkshire Forward (YF)	16	[2]6.5
Advantage West Midlands (AWM[3])	16	3
East of England Development Agency (EEDA)	0	[4]33

[1] Staff on a temporary or consultancy contract for the RDA, or posts funded by the RDA for which operational management rests with an organization other than the RDA.

[2] In collaboration, North West Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward and ONE North East each contribute one third of the staffing costs relating to 14 staff in overseas offices. These staff are not included in the table.

[3] AWM has joint funding arrangements with EMDA covering staff in Japan and the USA.

[4] EEDA's sister organisation, Invest East of England (East of England Investment Agency) the inward investment agency for the region which receives the majority of its funding from BED A currently had 33 employees as of 30 November 2004

Regional Selective Assistance Grants

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many regional selective assistance grants have been made since 1997; what their value is; and how many jobs her Department estimates have been *(a)* created and *(b)* safeguarded by the scheme. [206036]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) on 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1309W.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Mr. O'Hara: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for which pieces of legislation affecting business introduced by her Department since 1997 regulatory impact assessments have been made. [202549]

Nigel Griffiths: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry gave to the hon. Member for Twickenham on 27 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 596W.

The latest bi-annual Command Paper issued by the Cabinet Office lists all Departments' Regulatory Impact Assessments from January to June 2004. This paper, along with previous Command Papers, is available in the Libraries of the House.

The following Regulatory Impact Assessments published by the Department of Trade and Industry since July 2004, and for which a Command Paper is yet to be published, are available in the Libraries of the House:

Civil Partnership Bill and the Regulatory Reform (Patents) Order 2004 Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise Bill)

The Fireworks Regulations 2004 The Employment Tribunals (Constitution and Rules of Procedure) Regulations 2004

The Cosmetic Products (Safety) Regulations 2004

The Trade Marks (International Registrations Designating the European Community, etc.) Regulations 2004

The European Public Limited-Liability Company Regulations 2004

The Patents (Amendment) Rules 2004

The Companies Act 1985 (International Accounting Standards and Other Accounting Amendments) Regulations 2004

Employment Relations Act 2004

Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004

Regulations to establish a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the UK: October 2004

Wireless Telegraphy (Spectrum Trading) Regulations 2004

Wireless Telegraphy (Register) Regulations 2004

Research and Development

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Smart awards and grants for research and development have been given since 1997; what their total value was; and if she will make an estimate of the value that the grants and awards added to companies in terms of *(a)* cash, *(b)* jobs and *(c)* exports. [206296]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The information requested is as follows:

Financial year	*Number of awards (offers of grant)*	*Value of awards (offers of grant) (£ million)*
1997–98	455	30.2
1998–99	402	24.0
1999–2000	396	19.3
2000–01	578	28.6
2001–02	829	34.0
2002–03	1,140	46.5
2003–04	919	59.4
Total	4,719	242

The figures are for offers of grant made under the Smart scheme in England between 1 March 1997 and 31 March 2004. Smart closed to applications on 31 August 2003. The Grant for Research and Development, which built upon the Smart scheme, began accepting applications on 1 June 2003.

The most recent, independent evaluation of Smart in 2000–01 found that *(a)* annual turnover was nearly £500 million higher, *(b)* employment was more than 8,000 higher and *(c)* annual exports were nearly £270 million higher than they would have been without the scheme.

Research Councils (Consultants)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much each of the research councils has paid to consultants *(a)* to help them prepare for oral evidence sessions before parliamentary Select Committees and *(b)* for other services since June 2001. [202721]

Ms Hewitt: The Research Councils have paid in total £84,306 (inclusive of VAT) to consultants to help them prepare for oral evidence sessions before parliamentary Select Committees. The information on the total amount paid for all other consultancy services commissioned since June 2001, is not held centrally within the Department and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Shareholder Executive

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what appointments the Shareholder Executive has made to the companies for which it is directly responsible. [203601]

Ms Hewitt: Appointments to the companies' boards are made by the Minister in the relevant Department: they are not made directly by the Shareholder Executive. The Shareholder Executive will be expected to advise Ministers on those appointments.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Shareholder Executive's day-to-day management responsibilities are for the public shareholdings for which it is directly responsible; and whether these responsibilities involve authority over *(a)* operations, *(b)* budget approval and *(c)* appointments. [203603]

Ms Hewitt: The Shareholder Executive has the management responsibility for monitoring and advising in a shareholding capacity those businesses for which it is directly responsible; these responsibilities include consideration and advice to Ministers on budgets and appointments to boards but it is for the management of those businesses to be responsible and accountable for their operations.

South West Regional Development Agency

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the South West Regional Development Agency's financial support for a microsystems company in Estores, Plymouth; if she will seek an explanation from the agency of their use of public funds; and if she will make a statement. [202309]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* I understand that a full assessment of the development of the Estover Road site into an open access manufacturing facility was begun in February 2004. This included an impartial assessment by five independent referees and assessment by an expert panel. In November 2004, the Executive Panel (a group of RDA, DTI and Industry experts that provide strategic advice on the investment of the £40 million Capital Facilities programme) voted unanimously that a sustainable business plan for the Estover site would be very difficult to achieve and that the application into Round Two of the Capital Facility programme should not be progressed any further.

On the information I have received, I do not think that the South West of England Regional Development Agency and the DTI were wrong to carefully evaluate this potentially important project. Additionally, I am satisfied that due consideration was given to this project before the bid was turned down.

In the first instance both SWRDA and the DTI investigated the feasibility of retaining the BAE Systems Estover Road facility as an MNT Centre of Excellence. DTI supported the cost of this feasibility assessment with a grant of £1.384 million, in addition to the £550,000 invested by the SWRDA.

Under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are required to seek the consent of the Secretary of State on the use of public funds. The conditions under which an RDA has delegated authority to give assistance are set out in a Financial Memorandum which states that it may commit expenditure not exceeding £10 million on individual projects subject to certain conditions; any expenditure that is in any way novel or contentious, regardless of its cost, requires the specific prior approval of the Secretary of State. I understand that the South West of England Regional Development Agency decision to invest in this particular project came within the scope of this delegated authority.

Sub-post Offices

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has held with *(a)* parish and town councils and *(b)* the National Association of Local Councils on how these bodies might support sub-post offices. [205390]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have not held discussions with parish and town councils or with the National Association of Local Councils at this stage.

The Government recognise the importance of the rural post office network to local communities and will not take any decisions on the future of the network without a proper assessment of those needs. My officials are working closely with Defra and the devolved Administrations to identify future options for sustaining access to post office services for rural communities. This work is still at an early stage, but I am sure that they will seek the views of bodies representing parish and town councils at an appropriate point.

Telecommunications

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she will take to ensure that BT fulfils its obligation to provide an improved IPStream to DataStream migration process in the broadband market. [201828]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Increasing competition in the broadband market is an important part of the Government's strategy to make the UK the best place in the world for e-business. An effective regulatory regime is the best way of increasing competition in that market.

The implementation of the regulatory regime is the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom) as independent regulator. Ofcom is still working through the implications of its recent wholesale broadband market review and that the industry is aware of the concerns around the issue. My officials have asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Time Zones

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will discuss with Ministers in the Scottish Executive the merits of bringing time in England and Wales, but not Scotland, into line with Europe. [206029]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There are no plans to have such discussions.

Trade (Southampton)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what volume of trade passed through Southampton in each year since 1998–99. [205391]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The total foreign and domestic traffic at Southampton in the calendar years 1998 to 2003 was as follows:

	Total traffic (thousand tonnes)
1998	34,259
1999	33,289
2000	34,773
2001	35,689
2002	34,156
2003	35,773

UK Trade and Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she plans to discontinue UK Trade and Investment's Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad Schemes; and if she will make a statement. [203947]

Mr. Alexander: There are no plans to end the Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad Scheme (SESA). However, as part of its Trade Services Review, which followed an extensive Customer Needs Review, UK Trade and Investment is reviewing the support provided through all of its schemes to ensure that its resources are used to maximum impact and benefit to its customers.

Since the results of SR2004 were announced, UK Trade and Investment has been consulting widely with stakeholders over potential changes to its services, including those provided through the SESA scheme from 1 April 2006.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much UK Trade and Investment has spent on external consultants over the past six months. [203949]

Mr. Alexander: Our records show that for the six months from April to end September 2004, UK Trade and Investment spent about £2.414 million on consultancy.

Vendside Ltd.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contractual arrangements the Department has entered into with Vendside Ltd.; and on what date in each case. [204388]

Ms Hewitt: The British Coal Vibration White Finger Claims Handling Agreement is the only contractual arrangement the Department has with Vendside Ltd. The Agreement was signed on 28 January 1999.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Spain

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Spanish authorities in respect of the recent racism and violence at the football match against England. [204241]

Mr. MacShane *[pursuant to his oral answer, 14 December 2004, Official Report, c. 1526]:* There was an error in my answer of 14 December to the hon. Member, for which I apologise. The correct answer should have been:

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I discussed this matter with our opposite numbers the day after the match and expressed the outrage felt throughout the UK. They, as well as the Spanish Prime Minister's office, have issued statements apologising and condemning the behaviour. The House may also be interested to know that the Spanish anti-violence commission has just asked the Spanish football association to open a disciplinary case against the Spanish national coach, Luis Aragones, for his remarks about a footballer who plays for a team in the English Premier League. The whole House will condemn these remarks as racist

Abu Ghraib Prison

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when British officials were first informed of allegations of mistreatment at Abu Ghraib prison, Iraq. [204785]

Mr. Rammell: UK officials became aware of allegations of mistreatment of detainees in July 2003, but it was not until January 2004 that they became aware of allegations concerning treatment at Abu Ghraib when they were informed by the US authorities that detailed investigations had begun into these allegations.

Afghanistan

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which political parties have registered to participate in the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. [206334]

Mr. Rammell: According to the Afghan Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), by 30 September (the most recent date for which information is available) some 70 parties were recorded as being at some stage of registration.

A full list of these parties and other information concerning the election process is available at the JEMB website: www.elections-afghanistan.org.af/.

China

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government have had with *(a)* the European Union and *(b)* the United States of America regarding the lifting of the arms embargo against China; and if he will make a statement. [204768]

Mr. MacShane: The Government supports the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China. This review is on-going-it was last discussed by EU Foreign Ministers at the 13 December General Affairs and External Relations Council. In recent contacts with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, US Ministers have expressed an interest in the review of the embargo. However, the review and any decisions arising from it are to be undertaken by the EU only. The EU will take all relevant factors into account in the review. The Government does not wish to pre-empt the conclusion of the review.

China Human Rights Dialogue Round

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the November 2004 UK China Human Rights Dialogue round. [204626]

Mr. MacShane: The November 2004 UK China Human Rights Dialogue was held on 22 November in Beijing. The theme was "Human Rights and the Development of Urban Society". The delegations

explored in some depth issues relating to employment, housing and migrant worker rights and reform of mechanisms for dealing with crime. The UK side also raised some other issues outside this theme including for example Tibet. We are assessing the outcome of this round.

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 25 October, concerning his constituent, Mrs. V. Hobbs, and the Taba bomb. [205828]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* A reply was sent on 20 December.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's latest assessment is of the *(a)* political, *(b)* social and *(c)* economic situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [205634]

Mr. Mullin: The Transitional Government remain in place and continue to work, with the support of the UN Peacekeeping Force (MONUC) towards holding free and fair elections within the time scale laid out by the peace agreement. Many challenges remain, including army integration and re-establishing state control.

We are working with the Transitional Government and international partners to support the peace process and to repair the social fabric of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which has been severely damaged by war and misrule.

Macroeconomic stability has been achieved and the DRC's economy is growing. However, the majority of the population still lives in poverty and the country's rich natural resources are not yet being exploited for the benefit of the people of the DRC.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by the European Commission to implement elements of the EU Constitution prior to its formal ratification; and what his Department's policy is towards the implementation of elements of the Constitution prior to ratification. [201048]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* No policies or institutions for which the entry into force of the Treaty is required can be implemented until the Treaty has been ratified by all member states. However, in some areas, the Intergovernmental Conference outcome explicitly requires preparatory work. In particular, in accordance with the Declaration on Article 1-24.7 of the EU Constitutional Treaty, preparatory work is being undertaken on the procedures for implementing the decision on the exercise of the Presidency of the Council, on which a political decision is required within six months of signature of the Treaty. In addition, in accordance with the Declaration on Article HI-296, the High Representative for CFSP/ Secretary General of the Council, the European Commission and the member states have begun preparatory work examining the key issues relating to the establishment of the European External Action Service once the Treaty is in force. The European Defence Agency, Article 1-41.3 of the Constitutional Treaty, was established in June 2004. Member states agreed to establish the Agency in 2004 due to the pressing need for it to begin its work to help member states improve their military capabilities. The Agency was established under the existing institutional framework of the Treaty on the European Union.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has reached an agreement with the German Chancellor to seek an amendment to the proposed EU Constitution that would change the voting weights accorded to member states of different sizes. [206305]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* No such agreement has been reached.

EU-China Arms Embargo

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the likely implications of ending the EU-China Arms embargo on UK relations with *(a)* North Korea, *(b)* South Korea, *(c)* the United States, *(d)* Taiwan and *(e)* China. [204802]

Mr. MacShane: The Government will take all relevant factors into account in the on-going EU review of the EU Arms Embargo on China. The Government fully recognises the importance of maintaining regional stability. Since the imposition of the Embargo, the EU has agreed a Code of Conduct on defence export sales, including sales to China. In the event of the EU Arms Embargo on China being lifted, the Code of Conduct would remain the primary means of controlling arms sales.

Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the policy reasons for the UK's abstention in the UN General Assembly vote on a programme of work to include the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. [204763]

Mr. MacShane: The United Kingdom's reasons for abstaining on resolution A/RES/59/81 in the United Nations General Assembly were given in an Explanation of Vote when the resolution was considered at the UN First Committee on Disarmament (4 October-5 November 2004). It stated:

> "It is with regret that the UK has felt the need to abstain on L.34. As you will be aware, in previous years we have co-sponsored this resolution.
>
> The UK remains fully committed to an FMCT. It also continues to support the effective verification of international arms control treaties. The negotiation of an FMCT has long been an agreed priority of the international community and we would like to see negotiations begin at the Conference on Disarmament in January.

We believe that this resolution, as currently worded, divides the international community at a time when consensus to move forward and to do so as soon as possible should be our prime objective." [1]

[1] Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

Indigenous People's Rights

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with which individuals and organisations his Department has consulted in relation to the proposed Draft UN Declaration for Indigenous People's Rights. [204806]

Mr. MacShane: Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials have consulted a wide range of individuals and organisations on the draft Declaration since the UN Working Group on the Declaration was established in 1994. This has included Round-Tables in London with interested NGOs in 2002 and 2003, as well as on-going contacts in Geneva with a range of member states and representatives of indigenous groups. The aim of these consultations is to promote solutions to difficulties with the current draft, in order to allow a strong Declaration to be agreed.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the UK Government's policy is on the Draft UN Declaration for Indigenous People's Rights. [204807]

Mr. Rammell: The UK is concerned that many indigenous people do not enjoy their full human rights, and believes that this Declaration could be an important tool to help recognise and protect those rights. However, the UK has a number of concerns about the current draft, including the fact that it seeks to create new collective human rights, specific to indigenous people. The UK believes that human rights are universal and equal to all.

We recognise that governments of many states with indigenous populations have granted them various collective rights at national level, and have no objection to this welcome fact being reflected in the Declaration. However these rights bestowed nationally need to remain distinct from individual human rights, enjoyed by indigenous people and all others, and enshrined in international law. We believe that our concerns can be accommodated in a strong and meaningful Declaration, and we remain ready to participate fully in negotiations.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* discussions he has had with and *(b)* representations he has received from Commonwealth governments regarding the proposed Draft UN Declaration for Indigenous People's Rights. [204808]

Mr. MacShane: UK officials attending the UN Working Group on the Draft Declaration have regular discussions on the proposed draft with a wide range of member states, including the representatives of Commonwealth governments which participate. The aim of these discussions, which officials also hold with the representatives of indigenous groups, is to promote solutions to difficulties with the current draft, in order to allow a strong Declaration to be agreed. Neither my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary nor I have had discussions with, or received representations from, Commonwealth governments on the draft Declaration.

Iraq

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the size of the adult population of Iraq; and how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have registered for the forthcoming elections. [206333]

Mr. Rammell: The population of Iraq is estimated to be 27 million. The voter register for the forthcoming elections has been drawn from the food rationing database and includes 13.9 million names. It is not possible to say how many people are registered to vote since the process for registration is essentially a passive exercise. This means that voters need only contact their registration centre if they need to amend or make an addition to the register.

Israel

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the human rights situation in Israel. [204769]

Mr. MacShane: This Government have discussed a number of human rights issues with the Israeli Government. These include the restrictions that were placed on Mordechai Vanunu following his release from detention; the terms of the Citizenship and Family Unification Law; the conditions in Israeli prisons; and the plight of the Bedouin community in the Negev desert. Along with our EU partners, we will continue to monitor the human rights situation in Israel, and we will raise our concerns where appropriate.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Israeli Government on their disengagement plan. [205631]

Mr. Rammell: We have had frequent discussions with both sides regarding the Israeli disengagement plan. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed this with Israeli Vice Prime Minister Olmert and Minister for Foreign Affairs Shalom during his visit to Israel on 24 November. The Foreign Secretary urged Israel to co-ordinate both implementation and arrangements for the period following disengagement with the Palestinians. Israeli Prime Minister Sharon has since stated that he will make every effort to co-ordinate disengagement with the new Palestinian Government.

Maoist Insurgency

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the Government and the Governments of *(a)* Nepal and *(b)* India regarding Maoist insurgency; what assessment has been made of the impact of the insurgency on the stability of the

wider region; and what steps the Government are taking to assist (i) India and (ii) Nepal in combating this threat. [204800]

Mr. Alexander: We are in regular touch with the Governments of both Nepal and India about the Maoist insurgency, both at ministerial and senior official levels. I visited Nepal in November and held discussions with both the King and Prime Minister about the current situation. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has also raised the issue with his Indian counterpart, most recently on 4 December, and the UK Special representative to Nepal, Sir Jeffrey James, has been visiting Nepal and India regularly for talks with ministers and officials.

We have considered the actual and potential impact of the insurgency on stability in the wider region with the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development (DFID). Large numbers of refugees from the conflict have already moved to India. We remain concerned about possible links between Nepalese Maoists and far-left groups in north eastern India, which threaten stability there.

To help to minimise the risks these threats pose, the UK has been working closely with international partners. Our efforts are intended to help Nepal to move on from the current conflict as a democratic, stable country, with multi-party democracy, a constitutional monarchy, sustainable economic and social reform, good governance and a high level of respect for human rights.

For several years we have been giving considerable assistance to Nepal through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) to help the state counter the insurgency in a manner in accordance with internationally accepted norms and also to assist Nepal to tackle the root causes of the conflict. DFID has committed £35 million this year to an extensive programme aimed at reducing poverty and social inequality, and accelerating economic growth and improving quality of life and good governance. In all of our efforts we work closely with our international partners to ensure a unified approach. We welcome the close cooperation we enjoy with India in our efforts to help Nepal resolve the problems it faces.

Middle East

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken following the beating up of Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Presidential Candidate in the Occupied Territories of Palestine, by Israeli soldiers. [204724]

Mr. MacShane: During his visit to Israel on 24 November, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary pressed the Israeli Government to do all they can to facilitate the Palestinian presidential elections. Prime Minister Sharon has committed to do so. We were extremely concerned to hear of the treatment of Dr. Mustafa Barghouti by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) at an Israeli checkpoint. We shall continue to raise our concerns about IDF behaviour and about the need for freedom of movement for Palestinian candidates and voters in the upcoming presidential elections.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he will make to the Israeli Government concerning the release of Marwan Barghouti from prison in order that he can take part in the Palestinian Authority presidential elections. [204761]

Mr. MacShane: We have no plans to make representations to the Israeli Government concerning Marwan Barghouti's release from prison. Mr. Barghouti withdrew his candidature for the Palestinian Authority presidential elections on 13 December.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning road networks in the Occupied Territories which can be used only by Israelis. [204762]

Mr. MacShane: We regularly raise our concerns with the Israeli Government on the imposition of restrictions on the movement of Palestinian people and goods (the closures). My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this issue during his visit to Israel on 24 November. These restrictions contribute to the Palestinians' sense of frustration and helplessness, and make a comprehensive settlement more difficult to achieve. We will continue to urge the Israeli Government to facilitate maximum freedom of movement for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

Pakistan

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he made to the President of Pakistan during his visit to the UK on the treatment of minorities in Pakistan, with particular regard to *(a)* Ahmadiyya Muslims and *(b)* the use of the Law of Blasphemy in that country; and if he will make a statement. [204950]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did not raise the issue of the treatment of minorities in Pakistan with President Musharraf during his recent visit to the UK.

The British Government takes a serious view of any persecution of minorities and of other religious intolerance and discrimination in Pakistan. We raise our concerns with the Pakistani authorities together with our EU partners, and did so most recently in May this year in a demarche which specifically mentioned the case of a Christian charged under the Blasphemy laws.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204521]

Mr. Alexander: The information requested is shown in the following table:

	Average annual sick days per officer	*Sickness absence rate (percentage)*
1997	8.9	3.4
1998	8.0	3.0
1999	[1]n/a	[1]n/a
2000	6.3	2.4
2001	6.6	2.5
2002	5.7	2.1
2003	[2]4.2	[2]1.6

[1] Not available—incomplete information due to the introduction of a new data system in-year.
[2] Absences under-recorded during roll-out of a new data system.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203468]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend, the then Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

No complaints were made by civil servants from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204308]

Mr. Straw: Mr. Andrew Hood, special adviser to my right hon. Friend the then Foreign Secretary (Robin Cook), appeared before the Select Committee on standards and privileges in 1999.

Since then no other Foreign and Commonwealth Office special adviser has appeared before a Select Committee.

Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the case of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche was raised during the November 2004 UK China Human Rights Dialogue round. [204624]

Mr. MacShane: Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche was included on our list of individual cases of concern handed over at the UK China Human Rights Dialogue round which took place on 22 November in Beijing.

In addition we encouraged and supported the most recent EU demarche on the case which took place on 25 November 2004.

Test Ban Treaty

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many countries have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. [205632]

Mr. MacShane: To date, 174 states have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and, of these, 120 have also ratified.

Ukraine

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to hear the appeal submitted to the British embassy in Kiev on 6 September relating to the refusal to allow Mrs. Inna Isaacs to join her husband; and if he will make a statement. [203548]

Mr. Mullin: I regret that I cannot provide this information as it is not our practice to disclose details of individual entry clearance cases in a public forum. I am therefore withholding the information requested under Exemption 5 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. However, I wrote to the hon. Gentleman on 9 December.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the average per capita income of employees on state farms is in Uzbekistan. [205267]

Mr. Rammell: We do not have the relevant figures. However, we estimate that cotton pickers have been paid between 30–50 sum (approximately $0.03–$0.05) per kilo of cotton this season.

West Papua

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* European Union counterparts, *(b)* the United Nations and *(c)* the Indonesian government regarding the (i) human rights situation in West Papua and (ii) special autonomy law concerning the province of West Papua; and if he will make a statement. [204765]

Mr. Alexander: We have regularly discussed the situation in Papua with our European counterparts. A group of European Union Troika Ministers met with the President and the Foreign Minister of Indonesia on 28 October 2004 in Jakarta and raised the issue of Human Rights and Special Autonomy regarding Papua. The Indonesian Foreign Minister stressed at this meeting that respect of human rights was a pillar of the Indonesian Government's plans and told them that the government has endorsed a second plan of action on human rights covering the next five years. President Yudhoyono said that Special Autonomy would be the solution for Papua.

Our representatives at the UN are consulting the UN Secretary General's Office about any planned reviews of the Act of Free Choice for Papua.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary sent his Special Advisor, Michael Williams, to Indonesia as his personal envoy in December 2004. He met the President, the Foreign Minister and other senior members of the Indonesian Government. The situation in Papua was

discussed during these meetings. The President of Indonesia reiterated that conflict resolution in Papua is one of the Indonesian Government's priorities and that he would implement the Special Autonomy Law for Papua. The British Government welcomes this statement.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48-hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204168]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* 30 (61 per cent. of the total number) officials working in ministerial private offices have worked on occasion more than a 48 hour week during the last 12 months. Five of those have signed a formal waiver under the Working Time Regulations, representing 16 per cent. of the staff who have worked those hours.

WALES

Bangor University

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will invite the Higher Education Funding Council for England to investigate the reasons why the Batchelor of Education degree course at Bangor university was terminated before the end of the course; and what advice his Department will offer to Miss Christine Antrichan, a constituent, to enable her to complete her degree. [206253]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The University of Wales, Bangor runs a three year B Ed (Hons) in Primary Education, leading to qualified teacher status.

The university has no plans to terminate the B Ed degree programme, but any queries about the subjects offered within the degree should be directed to the academic registrar of the university.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004; [205162]

(2) how many Departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205163]

Mr. Hain: The amount of time taken up on preparation is not available, however, the work is carried out alongside normal duties.

Two member of Wales Office staff have an overall responsibility for preparing ministerial and official Christmas cards and may call upon routine administrative support in undertaking this.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205164]

Mr. Hain: 24 per cent. of Christmas cards sent by the Wales Office included a charitable contribution, and the Civil Service Benevolent Fund was the beneficiary.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205165]

(2) what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205166]

Mr. Hain: We do not hold this information separately and it would involve disproportionate cost to obtain it.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and postage of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205167]

Mr. Hain: The information requested is as follows:

(a) 1,475

(b) 1,425

Ministerial Christmas card lists are synchronised between offices to avoid duplication of recipients in so far as it is possible.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997. [203925]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W, by my hon. Friend the Minister of State in the Cabinet Office.

Wales Office

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library the independent consultant's review of 2001–02 which recommended the creation of further posts in the Wales Office; and if he will make a statement. [202736]

Mr. Hain: A copy of the report has been placed in the Library today.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Bury Law Centre

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Legal Services Commission in Manchester will refund to Bury Law Centre the costs associated with *(a)* the hire of locum solicitors during

the maternity leave of the former Practice Manager and Supervising Solicitor and *(b)* the recruitment and locum arrangements relating to the current vacancy in respect of the Immigration Caseworker post. [203657]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) has a discretionary power to make an additional payment to cover the costs of maternity leave. However the LSC has informed the Bury Law Centre Manager it will not use their discretion because Bury Law Centre is not meeting their contractual obligations.

Under the terms of the LSC's contract additional funding is not available for an existing contractor to meet staff recruitment costs. The costs of temporary staffing arrangements to cover a vacancy should normally be met from salary costs that have been paid by the LSC under the contract.

Court Fines (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of fines imposed by courts covering the Greater London area were not paid in each of the last five years. [205919]

Mr. Leslie: Information on fines imposed and collected by courts covering the Greater London area is provided by the Greater London Magistrates' Courts Authority (GLMCA). A following table shows current performance and payment rates since the establishment of the GLMCA in 2001. A second table shows 2000–01 payment rates for the 22 Magistrates' Courts Committees (MCCs) that were subsequently amalgamated into the GLMCA.

Table 1: Payment Rate[1] for Greater London Magistrates' Courts Authority (GLMCA)

Financial Year	*Percentage*
2000–01	[3]
2001–02	46
2002–03	40
2003–04	66
2004–05[2]	67

[1] Payment rate: defined as the amount paid into court as a percentage of new amounts owed.
[2] Up to date (April to October).
[3] In 2000–01 the GLMCA did not exist as a single entity. It was created from the amalgamation of 22 Magistrates' Courts Committees (MCCs) on 1 April 2001 and therefore no comparable figures exist. In addition, as a result of changes to the calculation of the payment rate in 2003–04, direct year-on-year comparisons are not appropriate.
See Table 2 as follows for 2000–01 payment rates for the 22 MCCs that were subsequently amalgamated into GLMCA.

Table 2: Payment Rate[1] for Greater London MCCs (now GLMCA)

MCC	*Financial year 2000–01 (percentage)*
Barking and Dagenham	59
Barnet	29
Bexley	63
Brent	44
Bromley	71
City of London	41
Croydon	48
Ealing	56
Enfield	67
Haringey	49

Table 2: Payment Rate[1] for Greater London MCCs (now GLMCA)

MCC	*Financial year 2000–01 (percentage)*
Harrow	50
Havering	75
Hillingdon	97
Hounslow	48
Inner London	27
Kingston Upon Thames	63
Merton	56
Newham	50
Redbridge	88
Richmond Upon Thames	86
Sutton	44
Waltham Forest	46

[1] Payment Rate: defined as the amount paid into court as a percentage of new amounts owed.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205669]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203343]

Mr. Lammy: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Department for Constitutional Affairs under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203345]

Mr. Lammy: Since 1999, my Department registry, which excludes the Court Service, has produced 18 schedules for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last

five year, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice

Disabilities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many of the staff employed by the Department have a declared disability. [205565]

Mr. Lammy: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. This includes data on the number of staff who have a declared disability.

The latest available information as at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at the following address-http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability apr04 4nov04.xls

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff in the Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205047]

Mr. Lammy: Since the Department for Constitutional Affairs is the lead Government Department on the Freedom of Information Act, the Department employs both staff responsible for wider Freedom of Information policy and also staff responsible for implementing the Freedom of Information Act within the Department.

The number of staff in the Department for Constitutional Affairs that have been employed to deal with wider Freedom of Information policy from 2001–05 is as follows:

	Number of officials
(a) April 2001 to March 2002	8
(b) April 2002 to March 2003	11
(c) April 2003 to March 2004	20
(d) April 2004 to March 2005	25

The number of staff that are budgeted to deal with wider Freedom of Information policy during 2005–06 is as follows:

	Number of officials
(i) April 2005 to March 2006	25
(ii) April 2006 to March 2007	23

The number of staff in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Access Rights Unit that have been employed to deal with implementing the Freedom of Information Act within the Department itself from 2001–05 is as follows:

	Number of officials
(e) April 2001 to March 2002	1
(f) April 2002 to March 2003	3
(g) April 2003 to March 2004	3
(h) April 2004 to March 2005	6

The number of staff that are budgeted to deal with implementing the Freedom of Information Act within the Department itself during 2005–06 is as follows:

	Number of officials
(iii) April 2005 to March 2006	6
(iv) April 2006 to March 2007	6

It should be noted that staff employed to deal with implementing Freedom of Information within the Department itself also have responsibility for departmental compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations.

Beyond those staff directly involved in the ongoing implementation and application of Freedom of Information Act, it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Department has to publicise the opportunities available to obtain information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 after it enters into force on 1 January 2005. [204322]

Mr. Lammy: Statutory responsibility for raising awareness of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act rests with the Information Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner's Office, which is independent of Government, has a programme of awareness raising events planned.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the public can realise the benefits of the Act. Accordingly, in addition to the Information Commissioner's publicity activity my Department has been leading a variety of awareness raising activities. In the run-up to implementation of FOI, DCA Ministers are undertaking a programme of speeches, media interviews and articles which commenced in the autumn and is due to continue in 2005 to raise FOI awareness.

The Government's FOI website, www.foi.gov.uk, is continually updated with FOI information and carries instructions on how to make an FOI request. My Department has also begun a programme of distributing 220,000 posters and 1.4 million leaflets to outlets visited by the public, for example public libraries, jobcentres and citizens advice bureaux. The posters will be in English and Welsh and the leaflets will be in English and 11 other languages including Welsh, in Braille and on audio cassette.

All Government Departments and public authorities proactively release information to the public as part of their Publication Schemes (which are a requirement under the Freedom of Information Act) to support greater ongoing openness and raise awareness of rights under the Freedom of Information Act.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance the Government have issued to local government on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. [204980]

Mr. Lammy: Throughout 2004, the Department for Constitutional Affairs has produced a number of publications to assist all public authorities in their preparations for full implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. This included a Model Action Plan, outlining the steps public authorities should take to prepare for the Act; a Training Guide, containing recommendations for Freedom of Information training; a generic user specification for IT Freedom of Information monitoring systems; and a Countdown to Implementation guide, produced jointly with the Information Commissioner and the National Audit Office, outlining final steps public authorities should take to prepare for the Freedom of Information Act.

In preparing this package of guidance, The Department for Constitutional Affairs worked closely with the Office of the Information Commissioner which has also issued its own guidance specifically aimed at all public authorities.

These publications represent one part of the Department for Constitutional Affairs' guidance and advice on implementation that is available on the Department's Freedom of Information website (www.foi.gov.uk) that serves as a useful reference tool for all public authorities.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance the Department issues on whether the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will cover internal correspondence, in writing or email, *(a)* within political groups on local authorities and *(b)* between political assistants and their political group on local authorities. [205021]

Mr. Lammy: The Freedom of Information Act provides a right of access to information held by public authorities. Under section 3 of the Act, information is not held by a public authority if it is held on behalf of another person.

The Information Commissioner's Office have issued an Awareness Guide (Awareness Guide 12) which provides advice on when information is held for the purposes of Freedom of Information.

Legal Aid

Tom Cox: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total cost of legal aid awards within the Greater London area has been in each of the last five years. [203611]

Mr. Lammy: The figures presented here are estimates of legal aid expenditure within Greater London based on the geographical location of courts and offices administering and paying legal aid in the area.

£ million

	Amount
2003–04	705
2002–03	640
2001–02	584
2000–01[1]	522

[1] The figure for 2000–01 does not include residual costs paid to legal aid suppliers for criminal matters who did not subsequently enter into a contract when contracts were introduced.

Estimates for 1999–2000 have not been included as the Legal Services Commission's system for payments underwent a significant change when they introduced contracting in 2000 and comparable estimates can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mental Capacity Bill

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he intends to respond to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' reports on the Mental Capacity Bill, with particular reference to the questions in appendix 1 of the Twenty-Third Report of session 2003–04. [206267]

Mr. Lammy: The Government's response will be available on my Department's website as soon as possible.

The response covers a wide range of issues, including advance decisions. I announced on 14 December that the Government would amend the Mental Capacity Bill to require advance decisions on life sustaining treatment to be written and witnessed.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202553]

Mr. Lammy: My Department aims to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their Named Day question on the named day and endeavour to answer Ordinary Written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but my Department makes every effort to achieve these time scales.

We are unable to give accurate figures in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2002–03 without incurring disproportionate cost. In the 2003–04 session, 62 per cent. of parliamentary questions (PQs), including Named Day, were answered within these time scales and 100 per cent. of PQs were answered by the end of the session.

Senior Women

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205566]

Mr. Lammy: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. This includes data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments.

The latest available information as at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at the following address: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender apr04 4nov04.xls

Official Documents

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the criteria used to decide which documents and files should be shredded; and what mechanism exists to ensure that documents and files are not destroyed for other reasons. [202105]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs keeps records for as long as they are needed for administrative and business purposes. Records of enduring historical value are selected for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of the National Archives on the basis of guidelines which are published on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204291]

Mr. Lammy: All special advisers' contacts with external bodies and organisations are undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204149]

Mr. Lammy: The number of ministerial private office staff in the Department for Constitutional Affairs who have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months is 44, and of these 100 per cent. have signed an opt out agreement.

SCOTLAND

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205150]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not available because the preparation of Christmas cards is a routine administrative task in which the minimal staff time involved is not recorded.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205151]

Mrs. McGuire: The preparation of Christmas cards in the Scotland Office is co-ordinated by one member of staff for whom it is one of a number of routine duties.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205152]

Mrs. McGuire: The cost of the Scotland Office 2004 Christmas card does not include a contribution to any charity.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205153]

Mrs. McGuire: The postage costs for official Christmas cards issued by the Scotland Office and the Offices of the Advocate General were *(a)* £164 in 2003 and *(b)* £182 in 2004.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205154]

Mrs. McGuire: The purchase of official Christmas cards for the Scotland Office and the Offices of the Advocate General cost *(a)* £679 in 2003 and *(b)* £687 in 2004.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205155]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office and the Offices of the Advocate General issued *(a)* 820 official Christmas cards in 2003 and *(b)* 865 such cards in 2004.

Engagements

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list his official engagements over the last six months; who was present at each meeting; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location was of each meeting; what issues were discussed; and what plans he has to establish a public register of such information. [202399]

Mrs. McGuire: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate

cost. The daily on-the-record briefing by the Prime Minister's official spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers' public engagements.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202247]

Mrs. McGuire: Details of the places visited by Scotland Office special advisers within the UK are not held separately and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, in the year to 31 March 2004, the total cost of travel by special advisers within the UK was £16,841; most of this relates to travel between Scotland and London. In the same period, no special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Staff Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200390]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The Scottish Executive and the Department for Constitutional Affairs provide training and development opportunities for Scotland Office staff.

The Office does not hold information in the form requested; the total direct expenditure on training was:

£

Financial year	*Expenditure*
1999–2000	10,486
2000–01	21,346
2001–02	20,755
2002–03	38,858
2003–04	33,008

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200410]

Mrs. McGuire: Most staff training is delivered by the DCA or the Scottish Executive and the information is therefore not available in the form requested.

Video Conferencing

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many video conferencing units are installed in the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [201191]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office has video conferencing facilities at its offices in Edinburgh and London. We shall shortly be considering proposals to upgrade these facilities.

CABINET OFFICE

Minister for Children

20. **Mrs. Laing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions he has had with the Minister for Children about policy co-ordination. [206113]

Mr. Milburn: Since my appointment as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I have had a range of official meetings including meetings with ministerial colleagues relating to my cross-Government role in the co-ordination of Government policy; my responsibilities for the work of the Strategy Unit and the Policy Directorate; my Duchy of Lancaster role; and my membership of Cabinet.

Strategy Unit

21. **David Cairns:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress he has made in implementing recommendations from Strategy Unit reports since he took up his post. [206114]

Mr. Milburn: The implementation of the recommendations from Strategy Unit Government reports are taken forward by the relevant Department or Departments.

However, key recommendations from the most recent work of the Strategy Unit which have been implemented include:

The creation of the Assets Recovery Agency to seize the assets of criminals.

The creation of at least 250,000 new child care places by 2005–06.

Trade and Industry

22. **Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions about policy co-ordination he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. [206115]

Mr. Milburn: Since my appointment as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I have had a range of official meetings including meetings with Cabinet colleagues relating to my cross-Government role in the co-ordination of Government policy; my responsibilities for the work of the Strategy Unit and the Policy Directorate; my Duchy of Lancaster role; and my membership of Cabinet.

Civil Service (Ethnic Minorities)

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on ethnic minority representation in the Civil Service. [206117]

Mr. Miliband: As at April 2004, 8.2 per cent. of staff across the Civil Service came from ethnic minority backgrounds, higher than the 7.3 per cent. in the United Kingdom economically active population.

There is still under-representation at senior levels, but we have doubled the proportion of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds since 1998, from 1.6 per cent. to 3.3 per cent. We have set new targets as part of the recent Spending Round to ensure we sustain and accelerate progress.

Civil Service (Pensions)

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the Government's proposed reform of Civil Service pensions, with particular reference to the effects on lower earners. [206112]

Mr. Miliband: The document "Building a sustainable future" sets out the Cabinet Office's proposals for changes to the Civil Service pension arrangements. It also initiates a consultation exercise with scheme members, the Civil Service unions and employers. The proposed arrangements will be fairer between civil servants. Lower earners are one of the groups who are likely to benefit.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203388]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at the National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Cabinet Office under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203390]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* Since 1999, the Cabinet Office has produced 79 schedules for the disposal of records which are specific to the Department's administrative activities. Departmental records are also disposed of in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by the National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, including guidance on disposal schedules. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice.

Ministerial Pension Scheme

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if the Ministerial Pension Scheme will participate in the Pension Protection Fund. [206863]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

It is our intention that schemes which were exempt from the Minimum Funding Requirement provisions under the 1995 Pensions Act will not be eligible for the Pension Protection Fund. We would expect therefore that the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund, which provides pension benefits for MPs and Ministers, will not participate in the Pension Protection Fund.

Mr. Andy Hurdle

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office for what reasons Mr. Andy Hurdle moved from his post in 2002 in the Department for Education and Skills into his subsequent posts. [204968]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

It is not our policy to comment on the position of individual civil servants.

Mr. Jonathan Sedgwick

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office for what reason Mr. Jonathan Sedgwick moved from his post in the Home Secretary's office to his subsequent post. [204966]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have been asked to reply.

The previous Principal Private Secretary left the Home Secretary's office in October 2004 on promotion to Director of Performance and Planning, Office of Criminal Justice Reform, following a cross Whitehall and external competition.

Ms Denise Maguire

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office for what reasons Ms Denise Maguire moved from her post in the Department for Education and Skills to each of her subsequent posts. [204967]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

It is not our policy to comment on the position of individual civil servants.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether Cabinet Office special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204321]

Mr. Miliband: No Cabinet Office special advisers have appeared before parliamentary Select Committees since 1997.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many special advisers there are in the Cabinet Office, broken down by Civil Service pay-grade. [206513]

Mr. Miliband: Details on the names and number of special advisers by pay band by department are published on annual basis. For information for the financial year 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to the statement given by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, on 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 466W.

Information for 2004–05 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

Task Forces

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Cabinet Office spent on taskforces and similar bodies in each year since 1997. [204887]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* Departmental expenditure for the financial years 1997–2002 for the Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF), an advisory non-departmental public body sponsored by the Cabinet Office, is published in the annual publication, 'Public Bodies' which is available in the Library of the House.

The BRTF expenditure for:

2002–03: £517,000

2003–04: £508,000

Annual expenditure on short-term ad hoc groups, task forces and reviews set up by the Cabinet Office is subsumed within departmental running costs and is not separately identifiable.

TRANSPORT

Airports (South-East)

11. **Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what contingency plans he has prepared for the outcome of the judicial review of the consultation process on airports in the south east. [206100]

Charlotte Atkins: Department for Transport officials and lawyers are evaluating the risks and potential impacts of the Judicial Reviews on the Air Transport White Paper and will provide advice to Ministers following the judgment. We do not expect a judgment until spring 2005.

Parking Charges

12. **Mr. Singh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes there have been in the total charges for parking raised by local authorities since 1997. [206102]

Charlotte Atkins: In 1997–98 the total parking income raised by local authorities in England was approximately £638 million. The latest figures are for 2002–03 when it was just over £966 million.

South Eastern Trains

13. **John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the performance of the South East Trains franchise over the past year. [206104]

Mr. McNulty: South Eastern Trains performance has improved over the last year rising from an annual average of 78.7 per cent. of trains arriving on time at September 2003 to 82.2 per cent. at September 2004.

Railways

14. **Mr. MacDougall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what efficiency savings his Department expects to make in respect of its responsibilities for the railways; and if he will make a statement. [206105]

Mr. Darling: This Government have committed record investment in the railways—some £73 million per week (£3.8 billion per annum). The 2004 Periodic Review by the Rail Regulator ties Network Rail into achieving 31 per cent. efficiency gains by 2009 and we need to make similar efforts in relation to the franchise elements of the railway, and also in the transfer of SRA functions into my own Department.

Gatwick Express

15. **Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the Gatwick Express. [206106]

Mr. Darling: The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has just completed consultation on its Route Utilisation Strategy for the Brighton Main Line including Gatwick Express services. An announcement on the future pattern of services on the line will be made once all the responses have been considered.

Ports

16. **Tony Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to encourage the development of small ports. [206107]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government recognise that even small ports have the potential to play a significant role in their local and regional economies. Our ports policy provides a basis for all ports to exploit opportunities for development. Government Office and the Regional Development Agencies have a proven track record in working with ports in their regions.

Mobile Telephone Use

17. **Lawrie Quinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on research he has evaluated on the use of hands-free mobile telephones in moving vehicles. [206109]

Mr. Jamieson: There has been a considerable amount of research looking into the effects of mobile phones on driving. The Department commissioned RoSPA to review the evidence and the report they published in 2002 provides evidence that using any type of mobile phone while driving impairs driving performance and significantly increases the risk of a crash, as highlighted in our publicity campaigns.

A3

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the start date is for work on the A3 improvement at Hindhead. [206136]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency's Press Release 079/04 classifies the A3 Hindhead scheme as a Regional Scheme to be progressed for future construction (beyond March 2008). The main works are programmed to start in the financial year 2008–09 but it would be the

Highways Agency's intention to make a start on advance works in 2007–08 subject to the availability of funds.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will visit the A3 at Hindhead to meet local residents and travellers to hear their concerns. [206137]

Mr. Jamieson: It would not be appropriate for me to visit because the Public Inquiry is still in progress and I will be involved in the decision making process.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last had discussions with the Highways Agency about the A3 at Hindhead. [206138]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State recently considered the relative priority of the A3 Hindhead improvement alongside other national and local transport schemes in the South East region. The conclusions from these discussions were set out in the press notice issued on 1 December, which confirmed the progression of the scheme subject to the outcome of the current public inquiry.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he anticipates *(a)* receiving and *(b)* making a decision on the Public Inquiry report on the A3 at Hindhead. [206139]

Mr. Jamieson: The Public Inquiry has recently been adjourned to 15 February 2005 although it is hoped that it can be concluded soon after it reconvenes. It is hoped that the Inspector's Report will be received in Spring/ Summer 2005 with a joint decision of the First Secretary of State, the Secretary of State for Transport and Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs later in 2005.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what public expenditure has been *(a)* made in the past 10 years and *(b)* planned for the next three years for the A3 Hindhead Tunnel scheme. [206140]

Mr. Jamieson: No work was undertaken on the scheme between 1994 and 1999. From 1999 to date the cost is approximately £12.3 million. £16.5 million is forecast to be spent in the next three years to get the scheme ready to commence main works in 2008–09.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the traffic volumes on the A3 at Hindhead were in *(a)* 1984 and *(b)* the most recent period for which figures are available; and if he will estimate volumes in 10 years time. [206142]

Mr. Jamieson: The forecast traffic flows for the A3 Punchbowl Bend at Hindhead, without the tunnel scheme in place, nearest to the periods requested are:

(a) 12800 AADT (1983 estimated flow)

(b) 27000 AADT (2002)

(c) There are no forecasts calculated for 10 years time. However, forecasts for the A3 without the tunnel scheme in 2009 and 2024 are 31000 AADT and 38000 AADT respectively

A30

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated cost is of resurfacing the A30 between Honiton and Exeter as a priority under the criteria announced on 17 October 2001; and whether the cost will be borne by his Department. [206691]

Mr. Jamieson: The estimated cost of applying quieter surfacing to this section of concrete road is £9.5 million, based on today's costs. The Department will pay for this work.

The Highways Agency will also be discussing with the DBFO Company the level of additional future costs arising from the resurfacing of the road, which will also be borne by the Department.

A31/A35

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress of the implementation by the Highways Agency of the recommendations made in the Hyder Route Management Study of the A31/A35, with particular reference to Morecombelake, Chideock, Winterbourne Abbas and Bridport. [205410]

Mr. Jamieson: The Route Management Study carried out between 2002–04 recommended that more detailed studies be carried out in a number of communities along the A30/A35/A31 to develop proposals to address community issues, including safety, severance, accessibility, noise and air quality. The studies covering Morecombelake, Chideock, Winterbourne Abbas and Bridport have now been completed.

The detailed studies recommended numerous minor improvement works and the design of these is progressing. Works have already been completed at Sea Road South in Bridport and a pedestrian crossing is due to be installed at Chideock in the new year. Design work on further improvements at Sea Road South, Bridport is underway with a view to commencing work in 2005–06.

The recommendations for Morecombelake and Winterbourne Abbas are being reviewed as part of the Highways Agency's prioritisation procedures, and will be the subject of further consideration.

The carrying out of the improvements identified in the detailed studies is subject to the availability of funding.

A34

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies he has commissioned of the *(a)* capacity of the A34, *(b)* projected traffic volumes and *(c)* case for adding additional lanes. [205889]

Mr. Jamieson: A scoping study to review the key issues affecting the A34 North of Southampton Corridor and assess the case for further study work was completed earlier this year. This work did consider the capacity of the A34 and projected traffic volumes, as well as issues of rail capacity and the planned distribution of land uses.

Ministers will respond to the study in due course.

The Highways Agency is also carrying out a Route Management Strategy for the A34 which is looking at general management of the A34 trunk road in the short to medium term, and to identify small scale solutions to capacity issues over a 10 year time frame. The final report is expected to be published in spring 2005.

A40

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has commissioned of the *(a)* capacity of the A40, *(b)* projected traffic volumes and *(c)* case for extending dual carriageways in heavily used sections. [205890]

Mr. Jamieson: The A40 is a local road. As such it is the responsibility of the Local Highway Authority and it is for them to undertake any such studies.

Aircraft Air

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if the Civil Aviation Authority will classify as a major defect all instances of smoke or fumes in the aircraft cabin that adversely affect the quality of cabin air. [206164]

Charlotte Atkins: The Civil Aviation Authority does not use the term "Major Defect" in its classification of occurrences. Reported instances of smoke or fumes in the cabin vary from a transitory, unidentified smell to visible smoke and fumes. The Authority has no plans to classify all such occurrences as high severity.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory tested the engine oil Exxon Mobil Jet Oil II for a complete analysis of its ortho isomers of the organophosphate trichloropyridinol present in the oil when conducting research for the Civil Aviation Authority Safety Regulatory Group's Cabin Air Quality Paper 2004–04. [206178]

Charlotte Atkins: The Civil Aviation Authority, when commissioning the analysis of engine/APU oil constituents by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, did not ask it to check for the presence of ortho isomers of the organophosphate trichloropyrindinol.

Alderley Edge Bypass

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future funding of the Alderley Edge bypass. [205601]

Charlotte Atkins: The Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley Bypass was provisionally approved in 2001 under the Local Transport Programme. As part of the Spending Review 2004 and in light of our proposals for devolved decision making, as set out in the consultation document "Devolving decision making: A consultation on regional funding allocations", we have decided this bypass should be one of the schemes remitted to the region for advice on its priority for funding within the available resources.

Under the proposals in the document, the North West Regional Assembly and the North West Development Agency would advise on the relative priority of this scheme alongside other transport proposals in the region in the light of long term regional funding guidelines. These bodies would be expected to consult widely within the region, including with local transport authorities, in framing their advice on priorities. A final decision on the timetable for funding the scheme will be made in the light of this advice.

Bendy Buses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has carried out into the road safety implications of the use of bendy buses. [205600]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department has not carried out any specific research on bendy buses.

However, the safety of these and other vehicles, including other types of large passenger-carrying vehicles, continue to be monitored through ongoing studies which collect data on injuries sustained by casualties of road traffic accidents.

To date, no issues specific to bendy buses have been identified.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by his Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years; giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202428]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department communicates where appropriate with organisations through conferences, seminars, workshops and exhibitions and holds internal events in the course of normal management. A table which lists events held on non-departmental premises during the period from the formation of the Department in May 2002 to the end of March 2004, has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004; [205174]

(2) how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards; [205175]

(3) what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution; [205176]

(4) what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205177]

(5) what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205178]

(6) how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205179]

Charlotte Atkins: The information requested is set out in the following two tables.

Department for Transport Christmas Card 2004

	Cards	*Cost (£)*	*Postage*	*Staff time*	*Staff*	*Charity*	*Percentage*
Central Department[1]	1,650	2,114	Not separately identified	4 hours	1	Lifeboats	100
Highways Agency[2]	No card	—	—	—	—	—	—
Maritime and Coastguard Agency[3]	20,250	5,902	Not separately identified	Not available	2	No charitable contribution	—
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	230	309	Not separately identified	5 hours	1	Cystic Fibrosis Trust	100
Vehicle Certification Agency[2]	No card	—	—	—	—	—	—
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	4,000	3,465	840	7 hours	1	Multi-charity	100
Driving Standards Agency	1,000	1,034	210	14 hours	1	Multi-charity	100

Department for Transport Christmas Card 2003

	Cards	*Cost (£)*	*Postage*
Central Department[1]	1,300	2,055	Not separately identified
Highways Agency	4,080	3,930	1,100
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	13,750	4,865	Not separately identified
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	230	282	Not separately identified
Vehicle Certification Agency	150	174	Not separately identified
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency[4]	Not available	—	—
Driving Standards Agency	1,500	2,009	300

Central Department

[1] In both 2003 and 2004 the DfT Board decided against having an official departmental card for the central Department. The information given is for procurement of the ministerial Christmas card and the number of cards that is given reflects the number that were ordered. It is not possible to separate out postage costs from regular mail, although the policy is to mainly use second class. The number of staff hours is based on drafting a submission to the Secretary of State, consulting the Board, procuring the card and clearing the proofs with private office.

Agencies

[2] The Highways Agency and the Vehicle Certification Agency did not have a card in 2004.

[3] The information for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for 2004 includes a Christmas card sent out as part of a fishing safety campaign.

[4] The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency does not have information for 2003.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [202417]

Charlotte Atkins: DfT incur no direct costs from in-house canteens as such facilities that do exist are contracted out and provided without subsidy. We may incur indirect contract management, accommodation and energy costs but these cannot be identified separately without disproportionate cost.

We are able to provide other catering information regarding the costs of hospitality. DfT Central comprising DfT HQ in London and Hastings, the Air Accidents and Marine Accidents Investigation Branches and the Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service incurred £216,000 on hospitality in 2002–03 and £214,000 in 2003–04. The six DfT Agencies spent £515,000 in 2002–03 and £557,000 in 2003–04.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205592]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and as a result the information provided relates to the period from 2002–03 until 2003–04. The details of the costs incurred on plants in DfT are either not separately recorded in the accommodation expenditure records or there was nil expenditure. The only information we have is an estimated cost of £3,244 for the cost of re-planting the main reception areas of the DfT Headquarters Great Minster House in October 2003.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed, as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203316]

Charlotte Atkins: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Department under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203317]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department was formed in May 2002. The records management service for the Department is provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Actual numbers of files destroyed each year prior to 2004 could be provided only at disproportionate cost but an informed estimate for ODPM and DfT is as follows:

2002—23,500; 2003—20,800; 2004 (to 6 December)—53,252. A further 23,400 files are awaiting destruction.

Figures for DfT's Executive Agencies, which are not included in the above, are as follows:

2002—9,925; 2003—15,616; 2004 (to 15 December)—13,520.

Records are destroyed, in accordance with the Department's selection and disposal policy, when they come to the end of their retention period and they are not required for permanent preservation. There has been an increase in the number of files destroyed in the last year to remove a backlog that had developed in the previous two years due to machinery of Government changes, the closure of the Hayes Records Repository.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203318]

Charlotte Atkins: Since May 2002, when the Department for Transport was formed, 85 schedules have been put in place for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice

Department Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability; [205801]

(2) how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205802]

Charlotte Atkins: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the Civil Service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments and on the number of staff who have a declare disability.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the Civil Service website and the following addresses. http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/managementinformation/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

Driving Bans (Medical Conditions)

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to oblige *(a)* opticians and *(b)* medical practitioners to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency of patients whose medical conditions should prevent them from driving. [203906]

Mr. Jamieson: The current licensing system places a legal obligation on the applicant/licence holder to notify DVLA of any medical condition, including defective eyesight, which may affect their fitness to drive. While doctors and opticians have a duty of care first and foremost to their patients, they also have a duty to the general public. On this basis, they are already under an obligation under certain circumstances to report to DVLA instances where they consider a patient poses a risk to road safety. This is supported by the guidelines issued to doctors by the General Medical Council (GMC) and by the College of Optometry's "Guidelines on Professional Practice".

Dualling

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which stretches of trunk road between Portsmouth and *(a)* Heathrow, *(b)* Gatwick and *(c)* Manchester airports have not been dualled. [206141]

Mr. Jamieson: *(a)* Between Portsmouth and Heathrow airport (via A3 and A25) the only section of trunk road that has not been dualled is on the A3 through Hindhead.

(b) Between Portsmouth and Gatwick airport (via A27 and A23) the only sections of trunk road that have not been dualled are on the A27 at Arundel and Worthing.

(c) Between Portsmouth and Manchester airport the only section of trunk road that has not been dualled (in addition to the A3 through Hindhead) is on the A556 between the M6 Junction 19 and M56 junction 8.

First Group

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has had regarding the punctuality and reliability of First Group's buses. [206832]

Charlotte Atkins: In the current year the Department centrally has received at least 16 letters directly from members of the public, and one from an hon. Member on behalf of a constituent, about the punctuality or reliability of bus services operated by First subsidiary companies. The matter has also been raised in debates in this House, notably by my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Stringer) *Official Report*, 17 May 2004, column 794 and my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Mr. Truswell) *Official Report*, 1 April 2004, column 1841 in relation to First subsidiaries in their constituencies. Complaints about bus services are also received by the traffic area offices of the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency.

In this context a service is unreliable if it fails to appear at all, and unpunctual if it runs unacceptably early or late compared with the registered timetable.

The Department is concerned about standards of bus punctuality in general. There are many causes, some within and some outside the operator's control. The Bus Partnership Forum, representing operators, central and local government, has recently approved new measures to encourage operators and local authorities to work together to improve punctuality standards, in particular through Bus Punctuality Improvement Partnerships.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205040]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. The numbers of staff (full-time equivalents) in DfT and its agencies employed, or budgeted, to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues, in the years mentioned, are as follows:

	Number of staff
2002	3.4
2003	6
2004	25.95
2005	25.55
2006	23.55

Beyond those staff directly involved in the ongoing implementation and application of FOI within the Department, it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

Freight (Points of Entry)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport through how many points of entry by *(a)* sea and *(b)* air commercial freight can enter the UK; and which agency is responsible for (i) the control of hazardous or toxic materials and (ii) the supervision of workers on ships and aircraft using documents of identity other than passports and visas. [204414]

Mr. Jamieson: Freight can be landed at any of the more than 600 port facilities in the UK, although commercial traffic is concentrated in some 50 ports with over one million tonnes of traffic per annum. However, commercial freight could be landed at almost any suitable point. Similarly, commercial freight by air could be landed at any suitable landing strip but in practice the majority passes through approximately 20 major airports.

The UK competent authority for the transport of dangerous goods (including toxic and otherwise hazardous substances) by sea is the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and by air is the Civil Aviation Authority. Once off-loaded from the means of transport to the shore/land side, dangerous goods enforcement becomes the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive.

Workers (crew) on ships or aircraft entering the UK are subject to the usual controls set by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office. Workers going on board aircraft from the landside are subject to controls set by the Transport Security and Contingency Directorate of the Department for Transport. Ships that are engaged in international voyages are all required to have a ship security plan approved by their flag administration. These plans include access control arrangements.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [202423]

Charlotte Atkins: All departments and agencies were committed to completing an equal pay review and action plan by the end of April 2003. Within DfT, the Central Department and Agencies, as separate units, completed their individual equal pay reviews and action plans within the given timescale.

Invoice Payment

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200627]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. The Department does not hold details of the date invoices are issued. However, it does hold data relating to the date invoices are received. The average length of time between the date of receipt of invoices from supplier and payment of the invoice in the last 12 months is 16.5 days.

The percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of the date of receipt of the invoice for the last 12 months is 98.27 per cent.

The percentage of invoices that remain unpaid after 90 days in the last 12 months is 0.24 per cent.

The policy in the Department for Transport is that all valid invoices should be paid within 30 days from receipt. The target in DfT for 2004-05 is to pay 98 per cent. of valid invoices within 30 days of receipt. This target and progress on achieving it is monitored every month.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205808]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was established in May 2002 following machinery of Government changes. A new policy was introduced dealing with the use/misuse of the Department's ICT resources. This policy has been brought to the attention of staff in a Departmental Bulletin and is contained in the Departmental Staff Handbook.

One member of staff has faced disciplinary procedures following inappropriate use of IT equipment in 2003.

Light Rail Schemes

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what support his Department plans to give to light rail schemes. [206101]

Mr. McNulty: All bids for light rail schemes will be considered on the basis of their value for money, wider benefits, and affordability.

Older Drivers

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of car drivers over the age of 65 years in England. [206384]

Mr. Jamieson: According to the National Travel Survey, in 2002–03 there were an estimated 4.2 million persons age 65 years and above holding full driving licences.

Paddington Rail Crash

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the Paddington Survivors' Group on the subject of signals passed at danger. [204897]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State met with the Paddington Survivors Group on 13 June 2002 and 3 February 2003.

The Health and Safety Commission (HSC), as the independent rail safety regulator, have published reports showing that 268 of the 295 recommendations (from the Southall, Ladbroke Grove and train protection public inquiries) have been completed. The HSC say that work is already well under way on the outstanding 27 recommendations.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201560]

Charlotte Atkins: The effective handling of parliamentary questions is an issue to which I, and ministerial colleagues, attach great importance.

No Department for Transport written questions remained unanswered when the House prorogued on 18 November.

Pollution

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to reduce levels of pollution caused by public transport vehicles. [206382]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department's PowerShift and CleanUp programmes—administered by the Energy Saving Trust—have provided grants towards the cost of converting vehicles to run on cleaner fuels and towards the cost of fitting emission reduction technologies such as particulate traps. To date 6,532 buses, coaches and taxis and have benefited from these programmes.

In addition, grants funded through the New Vehicle Technology Fund have supported the demonstration of a range of innovative clean, fuel-efficient technologies such as fuel cells and hybrid vehicles. The Bus Service Operators Grant also reimburses to the operator 100 per cent. of the fuel duty paid on gas fuels and bio-diesel, compared with 80 per cent. reimbursement for other fuels.

Maximum emission levels for carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter are also specified for these vehicles. These requirements are in European Directive 88/77/EC and its amendments and have been in place since 1993. Extra tightening of these standards will take effect from 2005 and will reduce emission limits by 95 per cent. relative to the 1993 limits for particulate matter and 61 per cent. for oxides of nitrogen. A further stage will take effect from 2008 that will reduce the limits for oxides of nitrogen by a further 37 per cent.

More generally, we are encouraging investment in new buses by means of a target agreed with the bus industry of reducing the average age of the bus fleet to eight years. The industry is on track to achieve this target, meaning that older vehicles with poor emissions performance are being replaced by new, cleaner vehicles.

Halliburton

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many private finance initiative and public private partnership contracts with his Department have been won by subsidiaries of Halliburton in each year since 1997; what the terms were of each contract; and if he will make a statement. [205077]

Charlotte Atkins: Only two contracts have been awarded by this Department since 1997. Both were to SPVs (special purpose vehicles) in which a Halliburton subsidiary had a 25 per cent. stake.

The first—a DBFO (design, build, finance, operate)—was awarded in April 2000, for the A13 Thames Gateway (transferred to TfL in July 2000). The Halliburton subsidiary was Halliburton, Brown and Root. The second—also DBFO—was awarded in February 2003, for the A1 Darrington to Dishforth. The Halliburton subsidiary was Kellogg, Brown and Root.

Quangos

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on task forces and similar bodies. [204712]

Charlotte Atkins: It is not possible to provide yearly totals for departmental expenditure on task forces and similar bodies except at disproportionate cost. In many cases the costs are very small (e.g. those relating to small advisory working groups where members are unpaid).

However, information for some bodies is available: Low Carbon Vehicles Partnership, established in 2003–04—cost £500,000 per annum; Road Strategy Feasibility Study Steering Group in 2003–04 and 2004–05—total cost £1,500,00.

Non-departmental public bodies have not been included, since information on these is provided in the annual Cabinet Office publication "Public Bodies".

Rail (Car Parking)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the availability and cost of car parking at terminus and key intermediate stations as a factor in attracting passenger traffic to the West Coast Main Line. [206633]

Mr. McNulty: The provision of car parking is generally a commercial matter for train operators. However, as part of its strategy for modernisation of the West Coast Main Line route, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has identified opportunities for car park provision at several key stations (for example Stockport). These findings have been shared with a number of interested parties including train operators and local authorities.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Network Rail concerning parking charges at Euston mainline station. [206797]

Mr. McNulty: None. This is an operational matter for Network Rail. I understand that Network Rail's Chairman Ian McAllister wrote to the hon. Member on 14 October on this issue.

Rail (Communications)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what initiatives he is planning to improve cellular communication coverage on the West Coast Main Line. [206631]

Mr. McNulty: Neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor Network Rail are aware of any such initiatives.

Rail (Journey Times)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what basis the maximum journey times stated in the public sector requirements for each rail franchise are calculated. [206632]

Mr. McNulty: Passenger Service Requirement obligations were based on the timetables in operation by British Rail at the time of franchising in 1995–96.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what percentage the maximum journey time stated in the Public Sector Requirement for rail franchises exceeded journey time *(a)* as shown in the published timetables immediately prior to the Hatfield rail disaster and *(b)* in the current timetable. [206796]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Passenger service requirements are available from the Strategic Rail Authority by contacting the Public Register Manager on 020 7654 6495. National Rail timetables are published by National Rail and are publicly available.

Rail Services (Industrial Action)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains were rescheduled or cancelled as a result of industrial action on 12 December; and what the estimated financial loss to train operating companies is. [206232]

Mr. McNulty: This information is not held centrally and is a matter for the train operating companies.

Railway Stations

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding is available for the re-opening of railway stations on existing lines. [206233]

Mr. McNulty: No specific allocations have been made in the Department for Transport budget for the re-opening of railway stations on exiting lines. This type of project would be considered to be an enhancement to the railway. In the recent Interim Review of Network Rail's access charges the Rail Regulator has allowed for some £2.1 billion to be spent on enhancements by Network Rail over the next five years. Any proposal for the re-opening of a railway station, which is in addition to that allowed for by the Regulator would have to be assessed in terms of its value for money as well as its affordability within the funds available for rail.

Ring and Ride Scheme

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the Ring and Ride scheme; and how much central Government funding has been allocated *(a)* this year and *(b)* next year for the scheme. [206035]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: There are two Ring and Ride schemes operating in the Totnes area. In both cases they are funded through a partnership involving the County council, the relevant District council and a local community transport group. The total funding from the partners for 2004–05 is in the following table:

	£
Totnes and Dartmouth Ring and Ride	29,335
West Teignbridge Ring and Ride	24,915

This does not include revenue received from fares paid by passengers using the services.

Decisions have yet to be made by the partners on funding for 2005–06.

The only funding available from this Department for the schemes is Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) which reimburses part of the fuel duty paid by the operator. Payments of BSOG are claimed in arrears on a six-monthly or annual basis. So far this financial year the Totnes and Dartmouth scheme has received £877.82p for the six months beginning 1 April. We have not yet received a claim from the West Teignbridge scheme for this year. Payments for 2005–06 will depend on the amount of fuel used on eligible journeys.

Road Repairs

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will include information on the cost of the outstanding repairs to local and strategic road networks in future national road maintenance condition surveys. [206569]

Mr. Jamieson: The national road maintenance condition survey measures trends in the condition of national and local road carriageways, footways and verges on an annual basis. It is not the most appropriate place for trends in the total costs of outstanding repairs to highways, which include bridges and street lighting, to be published.

Information on outstanding renewals required for local authority street lighting was published in the Department's response to the Transport Select Committee in June this year, based upon robust inventories of the lighting stock and its age and composition. More accurate inventories of the local road and bridge infrastructure stock and condition are now being developed. Along with current research into optimum service levels for the various classes of roads, this will allow better estimates of funding needs to be made in the future.

The Highways Agency maintains the strategic trunk road network on the basis of minimising whole life cycle maintenance costs. Through technical assessment of condition data, the correct maintenance is identified and carried out at the optimum time for a particular road, ensuring the network is consistently maintained in the required condition. The road renewals budget is targeted to meet this objective, thus avoiding the build up of repair work.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will undertake *(a)* to maintain the strategic road network at optimum level and *(b)* to eliminate the repair backlog on the local road network by 2010. [206570]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency currently maintains the strategic trunk road network in accordance with minimising whole life cycle maintenance costs while keeping the network in good serviceable condition. Correct application of the whole life cost principle ensures that the road maintenance budget is focussed to keep the condition of the network at the required level.

It is for local authorities to eliminate the repair backlogs on their roads, although the Department strongly encourages them to do so. In the five years since 2001–02 the Department has provided £4.2 billion in capital support towards this task. The good progress made by local authorities is shown by the high probability of the deterioration in local roads being halted in 2004, after years of decline.

Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken following the consultation on amendments to the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations which took place in 2003. [206894]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department has:

undertaken additional formal consultation about further amendment of the regulations for abnormal load escort vehicles;

held meetings with associations representing recovery and breakdown operators, to discuss their request for distinctive lighting;

carried out research in conjunction with the Highways Agency (HA) to establish appropriate lighting for vehicles used by the new HA Traffic Officers; and

sought legal advice about making amendments to the Regulations.

My intention is to proceed to make an amending Statutory Instrument, informed by the 2003 and 2004 formal and informal consultations and by the research results, in the new year.

Signage

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the siting of Tiredness Kills signs. [206103]

Mr. Jamieson: Current Department policy is for signs reading "Tiredness Can Kill—Take a Break" to be sited on the approaches to some motorway service areas, particularly in areas where there are few other opportunities to stop. They are generally located in advance of the signing for the service area, where drivers are able to stop in a secure place.

Space Technology

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial contribution his *(a)* Department and *(b)* non-departmental public bodies made to civil space technology in 2004–05; and what financial provision has been made for the period 2005–06 to 2009–10. [200542]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department plans to spend the following on civil space activities.

	£ million
2004–05	7.0
2005–06	5.0
2006–07	4.4
2007–08	4.0

Financial provisions for 2008–09 and 2009–10 have not been settled. The Department is not aware of any other financial contributions by non-departmental public bodies or research councils.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201421]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201446]

Charlotte Atkins: DfT's special advisers have not given any attributable interviews or written any attributable articles or contributions to newspapers, journals, books or other media between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202249]

Charlotte Atkins: Departmental Special Advisers travelled on two occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

(a) Nottingham—£126.00

(b) Holland—£656.68

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203459]

Charlotte Atkins: Special Advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203477]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203921]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203961]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1258-59W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204297]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office on Tuesday 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204317]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department was formed 29 May 2002. Since then, no departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity.

Strategic Rail Authority

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether a preference exercise will be run in *(a)* the Strategic Rail Authority and *(b)* DfT Rail prior to the transfer of work to enable staff to express a preference to take voluntary redundancy or to transfer to the new DfT Rail organisation. [206336]

Mr. McNulty: Staff in both organisations will be able to express their preferences for posts in the new rail structure within the Department for Transport and for any voluntary severance scheme which their employing organisation may run.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what methods posts in the new DfT Rail organisation within his Department will be filled; and what mechanisms he will put in place to ensure fairness in this process. [206337]

Mr. McNulty: The Department is consulting on a post-filling strategy with the trade unions. We will abide by the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice on Staff Transfers in the public sector (COSOP), which states that the principles of TUPE shall apply.

Our present intention is that in the first instance, where there is an exact match between existing and future jobs, in both activity and number, post holders will transfer. Where this is not the case, posts will be advertised within current DfT Rail and SRA staff on a level transfer basis. With some exception at senior level, we would not expect to look more widely until all internal options have been exhausted.

Selection processes will be checked to ensure that they are fair and consistent. Monitoring will continue throughout the exercise for any adverse impact upon different groups.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what mechanisms Strategic Rail Authority staff will be transferred to *(a)* his Department, *(b)* Network Rail and *(c)* the Office of Rail Regulation. [206338]

Mr. McNulty: The Government's policy as set out in the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice on Public Sector Transfers commits it to apply TUPE principles to these transfers even where TUPE may not apply as a matter of law.

The Railways Bill will make provision for transfers of staff from the Strategic Rail Authority to other public sector bodies, including the Department for Transport and the Office of Rail Regulation, to be effected by means of transfer schemes. The Strategic Rail Authority and Network Rail are discussing arrangements for the transfer of staff to Network Rail.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport where the organisation which replaces the Strategic Rail Authority will be located. [206237]

Mr. McNulty: The activities of the SRA that are transferring to the Department for Transport will be organised into a Rail Group within the Department, headed by a Director General. This post has been advertised with a location of London. The detail of exactly where the Group will be located is dependent on the development of an accommodation strategy, accounting for the impact on the wider Department.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how consultations with *(a)* staff and *(b)* unions are being carried out concerning the transfer of Strategic Rail Authority staff to (i) his Department, (ii) Network Rail and (iii) the Office of Rail Regulation. [206239]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport has begun a formal consultation with its Trade Union Side (TUS) on the staff issues raised by the implementation of the Rail Review. Staff are represented by an elected Staff Council with which Strategic Rail Authority management is consulting. This arrangement will continue throughout the implementation period and, where appropriate, involves both staff representative groups in joint meetings.

A rail cross-sector human resources group has been established to look at the issues associated with the transfer of SRA staff to successor bodies. Both Network Rail and the Office of Rail Regulation are members of this group. Proposals from this group are the subject of consultation with the TUS and Staff Council.

Thameslink

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Thameslink franchise is due for reletting; if he will take steps to ringfence any net payment by the new franchise holder for reinvestment in services to Thameslink passengers; and if he will make a statement. [206546]

Mr. McNulty: Expressions of interest for the new Thameslink/Great Northern franchise were invited on 17 December. The new franchise is planned to commence in 2006. There are no plans to ringfence any net payments.

Transport (West Yorkshire)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from *(a)* Leeds city council and *(b)* West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority on (i) the A65 quality bus scheme, (ii) Kirkstall rail station, (iii) Armley rail station and (iv) additional rolling stock for the (A) Leeds to Harrogate and (B) Leeds to Bradford railway lines. [205402]

Charlotte Atkins: I have received a number of representations about rolling stock for use in the north of England, but none relating specifically to the Leeds to Harrogate or Leeds to Bradford lines and none about Kirkstall or Armley rail stations. As regards the A65 quality bus scheme, the only representation I have received has been from my hon. Friend.

Vandalism

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to combat vandalism on public transportation. [206381]

Mr. McNulty: The Safer Travel on Buses and Coaches Panel has been established to look at ways to combat vandalism, assaults and antisocial behaviour on buses and at bus stops and bus stations. The panel brings together bus operators, local authorities, police, unions, and other stakeholders to exchange and disseminate good practice in tackling problems caused by crime and antisocial behaviour around bus and coach travel.

The Department also supports the work of the National Route Crime Group which is the cross-industry group set up to steer the rail industry's efforts to reduce the risks posed by trespass and vandalism on the railways. The Group includes representatives from the train operators, Network Rail, the Rail Safety and Standards Board, the British Transport Police, the Health and Safety Executive, the Office of Rail Regulation, Strategic Rail Authority, the Rail Passengers Council and the railway trades unions.

As part of our work to reduce crime and the fear of crime wherever it occurs in the transport system, last year the Department published a briefing paper on tackling graffiti and vandalism on and around public transport.

HEALTH

Aimspro

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the Aimspro treatment for multiple sclerosis; what trials of it have taken place; what the results were; what its current availability is; and what requirements need to be fulfilled before it is available to NHS patients. [205740]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Aimspro is a product being developed by Daval International, a United Kingdom company, for a number of indications including multiple sclerosis. Aimspro is still at an early stage of development and the company are conducting or planning to conduct a number of trials in these

indications. Further information on the safety, quality and efficacy of Aimspro will be required for this product to progress to licence application. Only very limited clinical data are currently available on Aimspro.

The standards and requirements necessary for the licensing of medicines are laid out in relevant European and national legislation and guidelines. These require that appropriate standards of quality, safety and efficacy are met. This will include information from Clinical Trials in the population with the disease for which the applicant is applying for a licence. Aimspro, like any other medicinal product, will need to meet these standards in order to be licensed.

Until such time as a drug is licensed, patients could receive an unlicensed medicine via one of two ways. Firstly, the Medicines Act makes provisions for doctors to prescribe an unlicensed medicine to meet the needs of an individual patient, on their own responsibility where they judge the benefit to the patient is justified and outweighs the risk of the unlicensed product. Secondly, some patients may be eligible to enter clinical trials for drugs in development. In both cases patients should discuss their treatment options with their doctor, who could then advise them on the most appropriate course of action.

Anti-depressants

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescriptions for anti-depressants have been issued in the last 10 years; and what the change in numbers of such prescriptions has been over this period. [206008]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of prescription items of anti-depressants that have been dispensed in the community in England in each of the last 10 years is shown in the table. The table also includes the average annual percentage change in the number of prescriptions dispensed over the same period for anti-depressants and for all items prescribed.

Number of prescription items (millions) of all antidepressant drugs dispensed in the community in England, 1993 to 2003

Items (million)

	Tricyclic and related antidepressant drugs	*Monoamine-oxidase inhibitors*	*Selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors*	*Other anti-depressant drugs*	*Total of all anti-depressants*	*Total of all Prescriptions*
1993	8.4	0.2	1.9	0.3	10.8	445.4
1994	8.6	0.2	2.7	0.3	11.8	456.1
1995	8.9	0.2	3.8	0.4	13.2	473.3
1996	9.1	0.2	5.1	0.6	15.0	484.9
1997	9.4	0.1	6.6	0.8	16.8	500.2
1998	9.6	0.1	7.6	1.1	18.4	513.2
1999	9.6	0.1	8.9	1.4	20.1	529.8
2000	9.7	0.1	10.4	1.8	22.0	551.8
2001	9.8	0.1	12.1	2.4	24.3	587.0
2002	9.8	0.1	13.3	3.1	26.3	617.0
2003	10.0	0.1	13.8	3.8	27.7	649.7
Average annual increase (%) number of items, 1993 to 2003			22.0		9.9	3.8

Notes:
1. Antidepressants are defined as British National Formulary (BNF) section 4.3 (Antidepressant drugs).
2. 1993 to 2003 data are based on items and cover prescriptions dispensed by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. It also includes prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England.
3. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospital or private prescriptions.

Source:
Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) data from the Prescription Pricing Authority.

Backlog Maintenance Costs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the risk-adjusted backlog maintenance cost for the NHS in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority in each year since 1997. [205023]

Mr. Hutton: Estimates can be provided from 1999–2000 onwards and this information is shown in the table. Insufficient data exists centrally to make estimates prior to that date.

The estimates are based on the average age of national health service trust buildings. From 2004–05, the method of calculating backlog costs by trusts will be based on specific data concerning the remaining lives of individual NHS buildings, initially provided by the Valuation Office, and will deliver greater accuracy as a result.

£000

Strategic health authority name	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	24,597	35,245	32,836	24,767	19,584
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	15,902	23,101	20,009	22,835	18,970
Birmingham and the Black Country	51,354	47,284	34,931	41,926	42,271
Cheshire and Merseyside	22,286	26,928	22,575	24,454	14,455
County Durham and Tees Valley	11,878	13,444	8,772	6,233	4,741
Cumbria and Lancashire	27,892	28,308	23,466	21,002	17,427
Dorset and Somerset	5,730	9,976	7,631	5,899	1,885
Essex	13,917	11,077	17,686	12,302	11,228
Greater Manchester	46,963	44,975	32,211	27,943	26,307

£000

Strategic health authority name	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	24,066	20,767	12,802	11,701	10,985
Kent and Medway	26,019	15,556	7,601	27,659	25,131
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	32,885	22,250	41,966	27,431	26,522
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	25,492	19,525	10,816	19,540	9,622
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	14,760	14,364	13,792	13,502	9,656
North Central London	39,407	44,131	41,341	64,447	61,168
North East London	59,623	52,595	54,289	44,384	42,359
North West London	49,089	32,347	43,185	31,638	46,350
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	31,232	33,133	18,551	12,046	10,360
Shropshire and Staffordshire	18,126	26,678	34,869	34,628	32,221
South East London	68,161	66,427	55,006	36,417	31,759
South West London	25,971	24,892	17,283	35,193	35,350
South West Peninsula	13,830	13,101	9,271	6,852	4,424
South Yorkshire	16,854	15,947	14,781	20,492	9,063
Surrey and Sussex	35,810	28,807	45,434	23,583	25,907
Thames Valley	47,380	26,438	30,906	32,858	24,606
Trent	45,589	57,940	52,088	36,539	37,152
West Midlands South	20,321	14,591	12,239	10,800	9,954
West Yorkshire	42,484	43,043	31,061	33,731	27,595
England total	857,615	812,871	747,398	710,801	637,053

Bedford Primary Care Trust

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether capitation allocations to the Bedford Primary Care Trust will be based upon *(a)* forecast population growth and *(b)* past census records from April 2005. [205490]

Mr. Hutton: The Department allocates revenue funding directly to primary care trusts (PCTs) using a weighted capitation formula.

Revenue allocations to all PCTs, including Bedford PCT, will use the latest available population data, at the time the allocations are announced.

The allocations will be based on the 2001 census and will take account of changes in PCT population figures, since the last allocations round.

Care Homes (Cleanliness)

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to improve the training of care home staff in regard to tackling MRSA. [204610]

Dr. Ladyman: Under the Care Homes Regulations, care home providers are required to ensure that at all times suitably qualified, competent and experienced staff are working in the care home. These persons should receive training appropriate to their work and that is why infection control is detailed in the induction standards set by Topss England and should be used by all new staff and those taking national vocational qualifications.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection inspects care homes at least twice a year to ensure they conform to the regulations and further advice on infection control training is available from specialists in primary care trusts and local health protection units.

Confidentiality

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department will take to ensure that NHS organisations conform to the Code of Practice on confidentiality. [205504]

Mr. Hutton: The national health service code of practice on confidentiality encapsulates guidance on the legal and ethical responsibilities of NHS organisations with respect to the confidentiality of patient identifiable information. Subject to oversight by the Healthcare Commission it is for local NHS organisations to ensure they fulfil their own obligations. The Department has put in place an information governance toolkit which supports the NHS in this by enabling it to monitor and measure its own progress.

Consultants Contract (Dorset)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost to NHS trusts in Dorset of implementing the new consultants' contract. [205417]

Mr. Hutton: We do not collect this information centrally and therefore do not have information regarding the cost to national health service trusts in Dorset of implementing the new consultant contract.

Funding for the consultant contract, agreed with the British Medical Association during negotiations, was allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) in December 2002 as part of main allocations. The amount that went to main allocations was 0.3 per cent. (£129 million) in 2003–04, 0.4 per cent. (£178 million) in 2004–05 and 0.5 per cent. (£224 million) in 2005–06.

Consultants Contract (North Surrey)

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost in 2004–05 to the Ashford and St. Peter's hospitals NHS trust has been of implementing the new consultants' contracts; and how much additional funding has been provided by the North Surrey primary care trust to meet this additional expenditure. [203142]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* We do not have information regarding the cost to national health service trusts in the North Surrey primary care trust (PCT) of implementing the new consultant contract.

Funding for the consultant contract, agreed with the British Medical Association during negotiations, was allocated to PCTs in December 2002 as part of main allocations. The amount that went to main allocations was 0.3 per cent., or £129 million, for 2003–04, 0.4 per cent., or £178 million, in 2004–05 and 0.5 per cent., or £224 million, in 2005–06.

Contract Cleaners

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many contract cleaners were employed in the health service in England in 2004; [204010]

(2) how many cleaners were employed in the health service in England in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [204011]

Mr. Hutton: The latest available figure for staff who undertaking cleaning in the national health service is 55,000 for 2003–04. This figure represents the headcount of both directly employed and contracted out staff as separate figures are not available. It excludes managers, administrative and supervisory staff who do not physically carry out cleaning functions.

No equivalent figure is available for 1997.

Crohn's Disease

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Government has spent on research into Crohn's disease in each of the last 10 years; what plans there are for future funding in this area; and if he will make a statement. [205237]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology. MRC expenditure in the 10 years from 1994–95 on research into Crohn's disease is shown in the table.

	Amount
1994–95[1]	0.240
1995–96[1]	0.830
1996–97[1]	0.740
1997–98[1]	0.800
1998–99[1]	0.760
1999–2000[1]	1.1
2000–01	2.4
2001–02	2.2
2002–03	2.4
2003–04	2

[1] The data collection method used prior to 2000–01 means that the figures for the years 1994–95 to1999–2000 do not includes spend on fellowships in this disease area.

[2] Information not yet available.

The MRC does not normally allocate funds to particular topics. Research proposals in all areas compete for the funding available. When appropriate, high quality research in particular areas of strategic importance may be given priority in competition for funds, but research excellence and importance to health continues to be the primary considerations in funding decisions. The MRC always welcomes high quality applications for support into any aspect of human health and these are judged in open competition with other demands on funding.

The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the NHS. The Department's national research programme spend on projects related to Crohn's disease in the period from 1994 to 2004 was £234,000.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of completed and on-going projects, including a number concerned with Crohn's disease, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Data Protection

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has conducted into proposals for subject access within the National Programme for IT under the Data Protection Act 1998. [205488]

Mr. Hutton: This is not an area where research is required. The requirements for subject access under the Data Protection Act 1998 are clearly set out within that Act and within its subsidiary regulations. The contracts administered by the national programme for information technology clearly specify the requirement for systems to have the functionality needed to satisfy subject access requests.

Dentistry

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health with which countries his Department is in discussion regarding the recruitment of overseas dentists to work in the UK; and how advanced these discussions are in each case. [202277]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Discussions are ongoing with Greece, Portugal, Germany, Spain, India and Poland.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people in each region who have one or more teeth missing; and if he will make a statement. [205064]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The most relevant information available is contained in the last Adult Dental Health Survey, carried out in 1998, on the percentages of adults with 21 or more natural teeth. This is shown in the table.

Percentage of adults with 21 or more natural teeth in three regional groupings in 1998

English region	Adults 21 or more natural teeth (percentage)
North	71
Midlands	68
South	77
England	73

Source:
Adult Dental Health Survey 1998 table 2.2.23

The percentage of adults with no teeth has fallen from 37 per cent., in 1968 to 12 per cent., in 1998.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were registered with a NHS dentist in each primary care trust in the north-west. [205074]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The numbers of registrations in the general and personal dental services for the north-west area by primary care trust (PCT) are shown in the following table. Registrations are given at 30 September 2004 for adults and children, and cover the PCT areas defined by the strategic health authorities of Cheshire and Merseyside, Cumbria and Lancashire, and Greater Manchester. The figures include patients seen in the past 15 months in personal dental service schemes where registration arrangements do not apply.

General and personal dental services: number of adult and child registrations in the north-west area, by primary care trust at 30 September 2004

Strategic health authority/primary care trust	Adult registrations	Child registrations	Total registrations
Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	890,857	326,343	1,217,200
Bebington and West Wirral	23,303	7,024	30,327
Southport and Formby	60,001	19,129	79,130
North Liverpool	45,784	15,225	61,009
Birkenhead and Wallasey	58,632	21,184	79,816
Cheshire West	69,432	25,277	94,709
Central Cheshire	86,789	37,108	123,897
Eastern Cheshire	93,966	31,334	125,300
Ellesmere Port and Neston	42,082	14,784	56,866
Central Liverpool	77,138	28,450	105,588
South Liverpool	31,672	11,954	43,626
Halton	45,389	17,046	62,435
Warrington	83,292	31,460	114,752
St. Helens	60,727	22,658	83,385
Knowsley	52,431	22,146	74,577
South Sefton	60,219	21,564	81,783
Cumbria And Lancashire SHA	630,416	247,016	877,432
Blackburn with Darwen	44,011	21,888	65,899
Carlisle and District	45,867	18,498	64,365
Eden Valley	16,117	7,914	24,031
West Cumbria	42,131	14,012	56,143
Morecambe Bay	99,412	36,554	135,966
Chorley and South Ribble	70,835	28,283	99,118
West Lancashire	36,735	13,303	50,038
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	32,016	16,511	48,527
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	62,125	27,690	89,815
Preston	48,663	21,117	69,780
Fylde	32,019	9,167	41,186
Wyre	44,692	14,798	59,490
Blackpool	55,793	17,281	73,074
Greater Manchester SHA	890,545	343,894	1,234,439
South Manchester	41,301	16,802	58,103
Central Manchester	48,179	16,189	64,368
North Manchester	51,847	15,903	67,750
Trafford South	46,271	19,198	65,469
Heywood and Middleton	26,968	10,358	37,326
Salford	67,590	29,047	96,637
Trafford North	30,015	11,146	41,161
Stockport	102,982	37,579	140,561
Ashton, Leigh and Wigan	133,563	46,325	179,888
Bolton	89,503	35,339	124,842
Oldham	61,895	25,971	87,866
Bury	60,359	26,048	86,407
Rochdale	37,051	16,280	53,331
Tameside and Glossop	93,021	37,709	130,730

Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the availability of dental treatment on the NHS in England. [205440]

Ms Rosie Winterton: NHS Direct receives some 20,000 calls per month related to dentistry. 91 per cent. of callers are being advised of available sources of national health service dentistry within locally agreed standards.

However, we acknowledge that, in some parts of the country, people who wish to register with a dentist face difficulties. To improve access to NHS dentistry we are undertaking the most far reaching reforms since 1948, supported by major additional investment in core funding and the training and recruitment of dentists.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the population has been registered with an NHS dentist in *(a)* England and *(b)* each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [203055]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the percentages of the population registered with a general dental service (GDS) dentist in England at 30 September in each of the years 1997 to 2004. For the years 2003 and 2004, estimates of activity in the personal dental service (PDS) have been included, these include patients seen in the past 15 months for PDS schemes without registration arrangements. Information showing a breakdown by primary care trust has been placed in the Library.

The changes in the registration periods from 1 September 1996 affected the registration numbers from December 1997 onwards, so the 1997 figures are not comparable with the later figures. The registration figures for the later years are affected by dentists switching from the GDS to the PDS. Patients may access national health service dental services without being registered.

The population figures for England and the strategic health authorities were issued on 7 October. For the year 2004, population figures for 2003 have been used. Population figures by primary care trust are available only for the years 2001 and 2002. The 2001 population figures have been used to calculate the registration rates for the years 1997 to 2001. The 2002 figures have been used to calculate the registration rates for the years 2002–04.

Registration rates with a general service dentist at 30 September in the years 1997 to 2004

	Total (percentage)
1997	55.0
1998	48.1
1999	47.9
2000	48.1
2001	47.7
2002	47.3
2003	47.8
2004	46.3

We are to introduce new contractual arrangements for NHS dentistry from October 2005, which are intended to make NHS dentistry more attractive to dentists. One of the main changes is the replacement of the treatment-based, item-of-service method of paying dentists with a remuneration package derived from an evidence-based assessment of patients' overall oral health care needs. This will enable dentists to spend more time with their patients and reward them for giving oral health promotion advice.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding his Department makes available to encourage dentists to join the NHS; and whether there are conditions attached to the funding to encourage dentists to remain within the NHS. [203059]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Keeping in Touch scheme (KTTs) offers support, up to £4,000, for dentists looking to return to national health service practice. Any other support, such as help with repayment of tuition fees or student loans, will be agreed locally by primary care trusts on their own initiative from their general allocations. We do not collect this information centrally. However, we understand that they are generally supported by agreements whereby the dentist commits to working in the NHS for a minimum period.

Departmental Telephones

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their own personal use for *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international calls; and if he will make a statement; [204727]

(2) what measures he has taken to ensure the telephones in his Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers; [204728]

(3) what the estimated cost to his Department is of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international numbers. [204729]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's policy on the use of telephones by members of staff for their own personal use is to allow short personal calls within the United Kingdom. Calls should last no longer than a few minutes per day.

Personal international calls must not be made, unless in exceptional circumstances, with line management approval.

The Department has ensured that telephones are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers, by barring telephones from accessing international numbers unless this is required for business purposes.

Invoices for international call charges are monitored centrally in detail to ensure that any abuse of the facilities would be picked up at an early stage. In addition, a breakdown of the most expensive telephone numbers is issued to business areas on a quarterly basis to enable managers to monitor telephone usage by their staff.

As direct dialling is employed on all Department of Health telephones there is no data held centrally which would enable an estimate of unauthorised personal calls to domestic or international numbers to be made.

Departmental Staff (Declared Disability)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205707]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the Civil Service by Department. These include data on the number of staff who declare a disability.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the Civil Service website at the following addresses:

www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical/information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls

www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

Driving (Drugs)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the risks of driving while taking *(a)* benzodiazepines, *(b)* tricyclic antidepressants and *(c)* antihistamines; and if he will make a statement; [204020]

(2) if he will introduce changes to labelling of *(a)* benzodiazepines, *(b)* tricyclic antidepressants and *(c)* antihistamines to ensure clear advice on possible effects on driving when taking such medication is included; and if he will make a statement. [204021]

(3) if he will commission research on the experience in other EU countries of the effects on the incidence of road accidents of labelling pharmaceutical packaging to include information on the effects of the drug on driving, with particular reference to *(a)* benzodiazepines, *(b)* tricyclic antidepressants and *(c)* antihistamines; and if he will make a statement. [204062]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is recognised that some medicines may affect ability to drive. Where a particular medicine or class of medicines is known to affect a patient's ability to drive, a warning is included in both the product information for prescribers—the summary of product characteristics—and patients—the patient information leaflet. Antihistamines, which cause drowsiness are is included in both the product information for prescribers—the summary of product characteristics—and patients—the patient information leaflet. Antihistamines, which cause drowsiness are required by law to include a warning on the outer label concerning the need for caution regarding driving.

In addition, for certain groups of drugs, including benzodiazepines, tricyclic antidepressants and sedating antihistamines, warning labels in relation to driving are added at the time of dispensing of the medicine by the pharmacist, in line with guidance provided in the British National Formulary.

The impact of medicines, which may affect the ability to drive on the incidence of road traffic accidents is unclear. There is very limited information systematically recorded by the police in the United Kingdom or elsewhere on accident causation due to the effects of medication.

Studies are currently ongoing to evaluate the impact of medicines on the risk of road traffic accidents. In particular, the European Commission is supporting a three year extensive research programme named IMMORTAL (Impaired Motorists, Methods of Roadside testing and Assessment for Licensing). This study aims to investigate the influence of chronic and acute impairment factors, including impairment from medicines, on driving performance and accident risk. Until the level of risk due to medicines has been identified, it is not possible to assess the effects of medicines labelling on the incidence of road traffic accidents.

Drug Regulatory Systems

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research he has conducted on drug regulatory systems; and if he will make a statement. [205374]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003, the National Audit Office (NAO) published its report of the value for money study it carried out into the Medicines Control Agency (now the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency). As part of this study, the NAO produced a supplementary report that compared the workings of regulatory bodies in six countries—the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Netherlands, the United States of America, and Canada. The aim of the supplementary report was to draw out common issues, and highlight distinctive features of the different systems. The report can be found on the NAO website at www.nao.org.uk.

The Department has not conducted any more research into drug regulatory systems which across the EU are governed by EU legislation.

Electronic Clinical Records

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has conducted on the legal implications of electronic clinical records. [205485]

Mr. Hutton: Electronic patient records are no different from paper records in terms of their content and legal status. However, particular considerations affect the security, confidentiality and information sharing arrangements for electronic records.

The policy and principles governing access to patient information, and obligations and standards governing its use applying to staff working within or under contract to national health service organisations are contained in the document "Confidentiality: NHS Code of Practice" published in November 2003. Breaches of confidence, or inappropriate use of health records or abuse of computer systems, may lead to disciplinary measures, bring into question professional registration, and possibly result in legal proceedings.

The care record service (CRS) being introduced through the national programme for information technology in the NHS is incorporating stringent security controls and safeguards that will ensure that there is more control over who has access to their information than is possible with existing systems. Under the NHS, CRS patients will also have the right to define some information as especially sensitive and only accessible under terms of explicit consent. This

reinforces the key statutory safeguards set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, with which all information users must comply.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Code of Practice cited in the National Specification for the Integrated Care Records Service has been developed. [205487]

Mr. Hutton: The document "Confidentiality: NHS Code of Practice" was published in November 2003. It is available in the Library as well as on the Department's website.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204352]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Expenditure arises on hospitality and entertainment only in the context of promoting the Department's business objectives. All such expenditure is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in "Government Accounting".

Information in the required form is not available for the years requested. The total amount spent by the Department on hospitality since 1995–96 is shown in the table.

£

	Amount
1996–97	105,192
1997–98	90,883
1998–99	67,953
1999–2000	50,114
2000–01	93,091
2001–02	121,968
2002–03	125,261
2003–04	106,337

Family Planning Booklet

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department contributed towards the funding of the Family Planning Association publication, Girls Out Loud. [204396]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department of Health did not contribute.

Food Supplements

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting on 15 October with officials of the European Commission initiated by the Food Standards Agency to discuss the Food Supplements Directive; and whether that meeting led to *(a)* the addition of nutrients or nutrient sources to the Annexes of the Food Supplements Directive and *(b)* assurances from the Commission about how it intends to interpret Article 5 of the Directive in relation to the setting of maximum permitted levels for nutrients permitted in food supplements. [201281]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency will shortly make available on its website a summary of the outcome of the meeting with the European Commission on 15 October and this will be forwarded to interested parties.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will publish its recommendations for maximum permitted levels for nutrients allowed in food supplements in early 2005. The European Commission has indicated that it will bring forward its proposals, based on EFSA's advice, after the summer of 2005.

Gymnasiums

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204368]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department currently has one gymnasium available to its staff on the Department's London administrative estate. Operational costs are met by gym members' subscriptions.

The Department occupies a building jointly with the Department for Work and Pensions in Leeds which has a gymnasium available to staff. Any operating costs for the gymnasium that are included in the facility price are paid by the Department.

Health Services (Newcastle)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many elective admissions there were in each year for 1996–97 to 2003–04 in the Newcastle upon Tyne primary care trust area; and how many of those admissions had been waiting for *(a)* up to three months, *(b)* three to six months, *(c)* six to nine months, *(d)* nine to 12 months and *(e)* 12 months or more. [202679]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Count of elective in-year finished admissions for Newcastle upon Tyne hospitals national health service trust—duration of time waited by method of admissions in NHS Hospital in England 1998–99 to 2003–04

Finished in year admissions		*Time waited*			
Year	*Method of admission*	*Under three months*	*Three—under six months*	*Six—under nine months*	*Nine—under 12 months*
1998–99	11 Waiting list admissions	26,415	6,623	3,833	2,860
	12 Booked admissions	40,634	981	117	90
	13 Planned admissions	3,193	1,048	456	323
1998–99 total	—	70,242	8,652	4,406	3,273

Count of elective in-year finished admissions for Newcastle upon Tyne hospitals national health service trust—duration of time waited by method of admissions in NHS Hospital in England 1998–99 to 2003–04

Finished in year admissions		*Time waited*			
Year	*Method of admission*	*Under three months*	*Three—under six months*	*Six—under nine months*	*Nine—under 12 months*
1999–2000	11 Waiting list admissions	25,825	6,951	3,630	2,229
	12 Booked admissions	43,552	1,071	152	70
	13 Planned admissions	4,315	927	508	266
1999–2000 total	—	73,692	8,949	4,290	2,565
2000–01	11 Waiting list admissions	8,468	2,450	1,357	1,143
	12 Booked admissions	26,879	828	106	52
	13 Planned admissions	1,879	782	468	225
2000–01 total	—	37,226	4,060	1,931	1,420
2001–02	11 Waiting list admissions	25,017	7,493	3,019	1,973
	12 Booked admissions	46,413	1,684	492	533
	13 Planned admissions	4,279	768	284	187
2001 -02 total	—	75,709	9,945	3,795	2,693
2002–03	11 Waiting list admissions	26,739	8,311	3,465	2,615
	12 Booked admissions	48,807	2,042	440	319
	13 Planned admissions	5,932	982	431	268
2002–03 total	—	81,478	11,335	4,336	3,202
2003–04	11 Waiting list admissions	28,075	8,269	3,749	2,826
	12 Booked admissions	47,750	2,494	229	111
	13 Planned admissions	5,157	972	518	654
2003–04 total	—	80,982	11,735	4,496	3,591

Finished in year admissions		*Time waited*		
Year	*Method of admission*	*12 months plus*	*Not known*	*Total admissions*
1998–99	11 Waiting list admissions	1,287	88	41,106
	12 Booked admissions	57	1,634	43,513
	13 Planned admissions	367	81	5,468
1998–99 total	—	1,711	1,803	90,087
1999–2000	11 Waiting list admissions	1,555	97	40,287
	12 Booked admissions	66	817	45,728
	13 Planned admissions	437	100	6,553
1999.-2000 total	—	2,058	1,014	92,568
2000–01	11 Waiting list admissions	798	26,459	40,675
	12 Booked admissions	27	18,829	46,721
	13 Planned admissions	550	2,654	6,558
2000–01 total	—	1,375	47,942	93,954
2001–02	11 Waiting list admissions	1,545	245	39,292
	12 Booked admissions	447	2,804	52,373
	13 Planned admissions	560	203	6,281
2001 -02 total	—	2,552	3,252	97,946
2002–03	11 Waiting list admissions	1,616	1.71	42,917
	12 Booked admissions	378	1,668	53,654
	13 Planned admissions	449	165	8,227
2002–03 total	—	2,443	2,004	104,798
2003–04	11 Waiting list admissions	1,890	194	45,003
	12 Booked admissions	80	2,356	53,020
	13 Planned admissions	159	657	8,117
2003–04 total	—	2,129	3,207	106,140

Notes:

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Time waited

Time waited statistics from Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Finished in year admissions

A finished in year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health

Hepatitis C

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the payment of compensation to Hepatitis C sufferers infected through NHS treatment, with particular reference to those for whom it is claimed that they overcome the virus. [206066]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The ex-gratia payment scheme for people infected with Hepatitis C following national health service treatment with blood or blood products became operational on 5 July 2004. The Skipton Fund administers the scheme. As at 6 December, the Skipton Fund has made 2,560 stage one payments and 112 stage two payments.

The press release issued on 3 June 2004 and the guidance notes issued with the application form make clear that people who have cleared the virus as a result of treatment, or who have cleared it spontaneously after a period of chronic infection will be eligible to apply for payment under the Hepatitis C ex-gratia payment scheme. People who have cleared the virus spontaneously in the acute phase of the disease will not be eligible for payment.

Hospital Cleanliness

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria are used to assess whether a hospital is rated as having *(a)* excellent, *(b)* good, *(c)* acceptable, *(d)* poor and *(e)* unacceptable levels of cleanliness under the 2004 Patient Environment Action Team (PEAT) hospital cleanliness scores; what criteria were used to assess whether a hospital was rated as having (i) green, (ii) amber and (iii) red levels of cleanliness in PEAT hospital cleanliness scores of 2000–03; for what reasons the number of strata of hospital cleanliness has been increased; and on what date it was decided to increase the number of strata. [205862]

Mr. Hutton: Hospitals are assessed against 24 separate elements comprising a maximum of 130 individual scores. The final rating is derived by calculating the total points scored against the total points available subject to a weighting process which places emphasis on specific cleanliness related aspects. In previous years, the process was similar though based on a smaller range of elements, although the "weighting" aspect was first introduced in 2002.

The increased scoring range was introduced ,to allow for greater differentiation in standards to be identified than was allowed by a three-point scale. The decision to increase the range was taken on 11 November 2003 and was notified to National Health Service trusts during November 2003.

Intermediate Care Accommodation

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the South East Region Social Care Commission's decision to categorise intermediate care accommodation as the same as permanent residential care homes for registration purposes; and if he will make a statement. [204659]

Dr. Ladyman: Establishments that provide accommodation and personal care as defined in Section 3 of the Care Standards Act 2000 must register with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). In determining whether or not an establishment falls within the scope of the Act, CSCI must have regard to the Registration Regulations 2001.

Mental Health Facilities (Funding)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many mental health facilities have *(a)* closed down and *(b)* run skeletal services due to cuts in Government funding in 2003–04 or forecast for 2004–05. [203190]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not centrally available. In accordance with our policy of shifting the balance of power, supported by other national policy documents, such as the national service framework for mental health, primary care trusts (PCTs), in conjunction with their strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, are responsible for assessing local health needs, and planning the delivery of their services accordingly. However, between 2001–02 and 2003–04, the Government invested over £300 million extra in mental health services. Furthermore, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his 2002 budget statement the largest sustained increase in funding of any five year period in the history of the national health service. This investment has helped to deliver significant improvements in primary, secondary and community care. Details of these improvements will be set out in a report to be published by the National Director for Mental Health shortly.

National Programme for IT

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress with developing agreements on cryptography for record-sharing within the National Programme for IT. [205503]

Mr. Hutton: Where patient information is to be shared across networks, it will be protected through the deployment of cryptographic security technologies that provide secure encrypted digital communications tunnels. These solutions comply with the latest Cabinet Office e-Government interoperability framework version 6.1.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the incorporation of implied consent into the National Programme for IT in the NHS. [205510]

Mr. Hutton: The national programme for information technology (NPfIT) in the national health

service is procuring systems that will, in due course, provide the NHS with the tools to fully implement the NHS confidentiality code of practice. This will enable NHS bodies to capture the express consent or dissent of patients where this is required, and will provide patients with a great deal of control over who can see what clinical information. The confidentiality code of practice, published in November 2003, was endorsed by the Information Commissioner and the General Medical Council. It sets out the interpretation of the requirement for consent to the use and disclosure of confidential health data that has been agreed with these bodies and with the Department's legal advisors. Where health data is used or disclosed solely for care or care related purposes, provided that patients have been informed of these purposes and of their right to object, it is reasonable to imply consent where there is no express dissent. The NPfIT in the NHS is developing a sophisticated anonymisation service, the secondary uses service, to ensure that other, for example, public health, research and managerial, requirements for data can be satisfied without breaching patient confidentiality.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Information Management Security Forum of the National Programme for IT last met; how often it has met since its inception; what its current membership is; and what outcomes it has produced. [205511]

Mr. Hutton: The information security management forum (ISMF) of the national programme for information technology (NPfIT) in the national health service last met on 7 December 2004 and has met a total of 23 times. The membership of the ISMF comprises representatives of the Department of Health, NPfIT, the NHS Information Authority, all providers who deliver services to the NHS under NPfIT contracts, and the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre. The ISMF has developed, agreed and published a contractor security policy, version 1, additional temporary policy enhancement notices and some related best practice guidelines.

NHS (Ethical Recruitment)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he will take to ensure that nurses and other healthcare professionals who are recruited into the NHS in Wales and Scotland, but who would not be eligible for recruitment directly from their country of origin into the NHS in England under the Code of Practice on Ethical Recruitment, will be prevented from being employed by the NHS in England from December 2005 onwards. [204953]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* All home countries observe the principles contained in the Code of Practice. All recruitment into the national health service in England is underpinned by these principles. Healthcare professionals employed by the NHS in Scotland and Wales may also apply to NHS vacancies in England.

NHS Equipment

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether changes have had to be made to procurement of *(a)* wheelchairs, *(b)* trolleys and *(c)* hospital beds in the NHS because of increased average body weight of patients over the last 30 years. [205018]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Patients have got taller and heavier over the last 30 years, which has resulted in changes being made in the procurement of such hospital equipment.

The National Health Service Purchasing & Supply Agency (NHS PASA) has a national framework agreement (NFA) for wheeled mobility products, which includes a range of equipment from paediatric buggies to barriatric wheelchairs with user weight limits of up to 50 stone. Weight limits vary according to specific models and their intended use.

Over the past three years, the trend has been for the main wheelchair manufacturers to increase the weight limits on their basic equipment to a minimum of 18 stone.

NHS PASA does not have a NFA in place for patient trolleys. Procurement of these products is carried out at trust level.

NHS PASA has a NFA in place for hospital beds. The specification for beds stipulates that the bed must hold a minimum of 170kg (approximately 27 stone), because the "Kingsfund" bed, standard hospital bed, is still in use. The old "Kingsfund" bed had a safe working load of 28 stone which was the NHS industry standard. However due to increases in patient weight, the majority of suppliers on the agreement now offer beds with a 42 stone safe working load as standard. Barriatric beds are used for clinically obese patients who need beds with a wider width.

NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust Programmes

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the full rental or lease costs of new facilities delivered by NHS local improvement finance trust programmes in the growth areas identified under the sustainable communities policy will be met from the day the particular facility is opened. [205491]

Mr. Hutton: It is for primary care trusts, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

Nurses (Lancashire)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses there are in *(a)* Burnley and *(b)* Lancashire; and how many there were in 1997. [204340]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff including practice nurses in each specified organisation as at 30 September[1] each specified year

Headcount

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Difference 1997-2003
	Total specified organisations	10,694	10,702	10,832	10,467	11,502	12,175	12,348	1,654
5CC	Blackburn with Darwen PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	236	251	313	[2]
5DD	Morecambe Bay PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	983	990	1,033	[2]
5F2	Chorley and South Ribble PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	295	333	402	[2]
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	202	205	212	[2]
5G7	Hyndburn And Ribble Valley PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	52	402	387	[2]
5G8	Burnley, Pendle And Rossendale PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	123	497	506	[2]
5HD	Preston PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	50	263	302	[2]
5HE	Fylde PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	28	142	154	[2]
5HF	Wyre PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	45	224	259	[2]
5HP	Blackpool PCT	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	64	284	313	[2]
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	1	[2]
QCI	South Lancashire HA	6	5	5	13	5	[2]	[2]	[2]
QCX	East Lancashire HA	6	8	14	6	6	[2]	[2]	[2]
QCY	North West Lancashire HA	7	7	6	10	20	[2]	[2]	[2]
RE3	South Cumbria Community and Mental Health NHS Trust	304	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
RES	Westmorland Hospital NHS Trust	247	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
REU	Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust	1,382	1,369	1,358	1,354	1,413	1,080	[2]	[2]
REV	Lancaster Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	638	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
REW	Lancaster Priority Services NHS Trust	614	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
RJP	Southport and Formby Community Health Service NHS Trust	262	255	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
RJU	Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust	701	746	775	772	603	[2]	[2]	[2]
RJV	West Lancashire NHS Trust	510	504	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
RJX	Calderstones Hospital NHS Trust	363	293	250	262	276	275	289	-74
RM8	Furness Hospitals NHS Trust	500	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
RMB	Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribbla Valley Health Care	1,260	1,274	1,547	1,189	1,206	1,161	[2]	[2]
RMD	Lancashire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	[2]	[2]	[2]	35	72	105	121	[2]
RME	Communicare NHS Trust	472	483	509	522	387	[2]	[2]	[2]
RMF	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	1,272	1,234	1,264	1,256	1,330	[2]	[2]	[2]
RMG	Guild Community Healthcare NHS Trust	394	436	464	446	485	[2]	[2]	[2]
RML	Blackpool Wyre And Fylde Community Health Services	845	865	871	868	910	[2]	[2]	[2]
RMR	Blackpool Victoria	911	939	968	973	1,140	[2]	[2]	[2]
RTX	Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	[2]	1,471	1,580	1,441	1,529	1,549	1,519	[2]
RTY	Bay Community NHS Trust	[2]	813	808	835	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
RVT	North Sefton and West Lancashire Community NHS Trust	[2]	[2]	453	475	472	[2]	[2]	[2]
RW5	Lancashire Care NHS Trust	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	1,002	1,021	[2]
RXL	Blackpool, Fylde And Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	1,497	1,475	[2]
RXN	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	1,915	1,928	[2]
RXR	East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	2,143	[2]

[1] Data as at 30 September each year except practice nurse data as at 1 October 1997-99.
[2] Not applicable.

Source:
Department of Health general and personal medical services statistics.
Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Officials (Working Hours)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204143]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

Nine officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have signed a waiver, which represents 26 per cent., of the total.

Paediatric Cardiac Care

Mr. Pound: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps have been taken to implement the recommendations of the Kennedy Report, with particular reference to the professional development of paediatric cardiac nurses; [199607]

(2) what assessment has been made of the impact of the disbanding of national courses for multiprofessional groups on paediatric cardiac education. [199608]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answers 29 November 2004]*: "Learning from Bristol: the Department of Health's Response to the Report of the Public Inquiry into children's heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary 1984–1995",—Cm 5363—was published on 17 January 2002. In it, we accepted the broad principles on which the Kennedy Report was based and agreed with most of the 198 recommendations.

Since then, much progress has been made on the key themes of the response: patient empowerment; strengthening professional regulation and inspection; improving children's services; ensuring safety of care; improving management and leadership; and improving information, decision making and performance monitoring.

Examples of the actions taken to date include major reforms to the healthcare regulatory bodies and the creation of the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence to oversee them; a review of the national health service complaints procedure and publication of guidance on whistle-blowing; the launch of the "Informed Patient" project, designed to make quality information available to patients; the establishment of the Commission for Health Improvement—now the Healthcare Commission—and National Patient Safety Agency; the launch of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence interventional procedures programme; and the publication of the national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity services in September 2004. The standards for children's hospital services were published in April 2003, ahead of the rest of the NSF.

In regard to continuing development, all healthcare professionals have a duty to maintain their knowledge and keep their skills up to date. Since April 2002, over £80 million has been invested in the development of an infrastructure for continuing professional development in the NHS.

We are not aware of any specific impact from the disbandment of national courses for multi-professional groups on paediatric cardiac education.

Psoriasis

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many courses of hospital-based treatment for psoriasis there were in each strategic health authority area *(a)* in total and *(b)* per head of population from 1998 to 2003; and if he will estimate the cost of each course of hospital-based treatment. [204411]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the number of finished consultant episodes (FCEs), where psoriasis was the primary diagnosis has been placed in the Library.

The national average costs of treating all major skin conditions in 2002–03, the latest year for which information is available, is shown in the table. It is not possible to provide data broken down by specific condition.

Patient type	*HRG code*	*HRG label*	*Number of FCEs*	*National average unit cost (£)*
Elective in-patient	J39	Major dermatological conditions >69 years old or with complications and comorbidities	1,226	3,162
Elective inpatient	J40	Major dermatological conditions <70 years old or without complications and comorbidities	2,129	2,832
Elective inpatient	J41	Major skin infections >69 years old or with complications and comorbidities	361	1,975
Elective inpatient	J42	Major skin infections ≤70 years old or without complications and comorbidities	174	1,246
Non-elective inpatient	J39	Major dermatological conditions >69 years old or with complications and comorbidities	2,845	1,852
Non-elective inpatient	J40	Major dermatological conditions <70 years old or without complications and comorbidities	4,680	1,404
Non-elective inpatient	J41	Major skin infections >69 years old or with complications and comorbidities	27,439	1,468
Non-elective inpatient	J42	Major skin infections <70 years old or without complications and comorbidities	17,428	919
Day case	J39	Major dermatological conditions >69 years old or with complications and comorbidities	683	254
Day case	J40	Major dermatological conditions <70 years old or without complications and comorbidities	6,984	208
Day case	J41	Major skin infections >69 years old or with complications and comorbidities	151	410
Day case	J42	Major skin infections <70 years old or without complications and comorbidities	156	337

Source:
National health service trusts own data—Reference Costs 2003—relating to the financial year 2002–03.

Security Standards

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of NHS organisations certified to BS 7799–2:2002 security standard; and what proportion of products supplied under the National Programme for IT comply with this standard. [205502]

Mr. Hutton: In common with other public service bodies, national health service organisations are not currently required to formally register under BS7799–2:2002 but are required to undertake local assessments of their BS7799 compliance. No estimates are therefore available. Contractors to the national programme for information technology in the NHS are required to maintain a BS7799–2:2002 compliant Information Security Management System for all services provided to the NHS. A review of contractor BS7799 compliance is currently under way.

Senior Women

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205708]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 1 April 2004, there were 136 women in senior positions in the Department and this represents 36.8 per cent., of the Senior Civil Service in the Department.

Shalder House/Platters Farm

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will review the inspection process of the South East Region Social Care Commission for the registration requirements of *(a)* Shalder House and *(b)* Platters Farm in the Medway towns; and if he will make a statement. [204657]

Dr. Ladyman: The process for registration of care homes is set down in the Care Standards Act (CSA) 2000 and the Registration Regulations 2001. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) must have regard to the legislation in determining whether or not an establishment should be registered as a care home.

I understand from the Chair of the CSCI that Shalder House meets the definition of a care home as set down in Section 3 of the CSA 2000. Platters Farm has applied for a variation to its current registration to include intermediate care beds.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203451]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203502]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203913]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203969]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband), on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1258–59W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204289]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, (Ruth Kelly), on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1005W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204309]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Departmental special advisers have made no appearances before Parliamentary select committees since May 1997.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 360W, on strategic health authorities, if he will list *(a)* the average forecast year-end deficit of primary care trusts in England in the same format as his answer of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 131W, on primary care trusts and *(b)* the anticipated financial deficit in the year to 31 March 2005 of (i) strategic health authorities, (ii) primary care trusts and (iii) NHS trusts in England in the same format as his answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 6–7W, on health service deficits (South West). [205851]

Mr. Hutton: Pursuant to my reply of 6 December, we have no plans to publish national un-audited in year financial forecasts. Audited information in respect of the 2004–05 financial position of all strategic health authorities (SHAs), primary care trusts and national health service trusts will be published in their individual annual accounts and will be available centrally in autumn 2005. Where published information for individual bodies is available locally, for example from monthly board reports, then the Department can usually provide a reply from information supplied by the SHAs.

Taskforces

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department spent on task forces and similar bodies in each year since 1997. [204876]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* Task forces and "ad hoc' advisory groups in the Department generally have a short-term focus and when

their work comes to an end they are disbanded. They are usually created to give expert advice to Ministers on a specific issue and are expected to remain on operation for less than two years. They do not generally have a formal separate budget allocated to them, and their running costs are not separately identifiable within the Department's accounts. Identifying such expenditure would involve disproportionate cost.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is to receive a catheter ablation in England at the latest date for which figures are available. [205065]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Duration of average time waited from waiting list and booked admissions for procedures—catheter ablation in national health service hospitals in England, 2003–04

Procedure	*Average time waited in days*
Catheter ablation K571-K572 (OPCS 4R)	178

Notes:
1. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
2. Time waited statistics from Hospital episode statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:
HES, Department of Health.

Working Time Directive (Dorset)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of implementing the European Working Time Directive for NHS trusts in Dorset. [205414]

Mr. Hutton: We do not collect this information centrally.

Implementation of the Working Time Directive is a local matter for national health service trusts, performance managed by strategic health authorities.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Agricultural Students

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* undergraduate and *(b)* postgraduate entrants to (i) agricultural colleges and (ii) university agricultural departments there were in each of the last five years. [204434]

Dr. Howells: The available information is given in the table.

HE Entrants with a Main Subject of Study of "Agriculture and related subjects" at English Institutions

Academic Year	*HE sector institutions*			*FE sector institutions*			*All*
	PG	*UG*	*Total*	*PG*	*UG*	*Total*	
1998/99	865	3,925	4,790	35	1,320	1,355	6,145
1999/00	895	3,705	4,595	15	1,730	1,745	6,340
2000/01	1,075	3,745	4,820	0	1,260	1,260	6,085
2001/02	1,115	3,825	4,940	0	1,470	1,470	6,410
2002/03[1]	1,140	3,510	4,650	10	1,125	1,135	5,785

[1] HESA introduced a new method of coding subjects in 2002/03 therefore figures are not directly comparable to earlier years.
Note: Figures are on a snapshot basis as at 1 December for study in HE institutions and the 1ovember for study in FE institutions, and are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Learning Skills Council (LSC)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the *(a)* agricultural colleges and *(b)* university agricultural departments that have closed over the last five years. [204436]

Dr. Howells: For the HE sector, information on the closure of particular university departments is not collected by either the Department for Education and Skills or the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Higher Education Institutions are autonomous bodies and any decisions on closures of departments are made by the institutions themselves and not Government or the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

For the FE sector, a list of all agricultural/horticultural colleges which have been involved in merger or other form of reorganisation i.e. transfer to the Higher Education sector in the last five years are included in the tables.

Mergers under the Further Education Funding Council

Colleges	*Region*	*Type of Merger*	*Name of merged institution*	*Operative Date*
Durham College of Agriculture and Horticulture and East Durham Community College	North East	Double dissolution	East Durham and Houghall Community College	1 June 1999
Holme Lacey College and Pershore and Hindlip College	West Midlands	Single dissolution (Holme Lacey)	The Pershore Group of Colleges	1 August 1999
Kirkley Hall College and Northumberland College	North East	Single dissolution (Kirkley Hall)	Northumberland College	1 January 2000

Mergers under the Further Education Funding Council

Colleges	*Region*	*Type of Merger*	*Name of merged institution*	*Operative Date*
Brooksby College and Melton Mowbray College	East Midlands	Single dissolution (MMC)	Brooksby Melton College	1 September 2000
Trowbridge College, Chippenham College and Lackham College	South West	Triple dissolution	Wiltshire College	1 November 2000
Walford College and North Shropshire College, Walford	West Midlands	Single dissolution (WC)	Walford and North Shropshire College	1 January 2001

Source: Learning Skills Council

FE/HE mergers under the Further Education Funding Council

College	*Region*	*Assets transferred to*	*Operative Date*
Brackenhurst College	East Midlands	Nottingham Trent University	1 April 1999

Source: Learning & Skills Council

FE mergers under the Learning Skills Council

Colleges	*Local Learning Skills Council*	*Type of merger*	*Name of merged institution*	*Operative Date*
Broomfield College, Derby Tertiary College, Wilmorton and Mackworth College	Derbyshire	Triple dissolution	Derby College	1 January 2002
Brinsbury College and Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology	Sussex	Single dissolution (BC)	Chichester College	1 August 2002
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education and MerristWood College	Surrey	Single Dissolution (MWC)	Guildford College of Further and Higher Education	1 August 2003
Cannington College and Bridgwater College	Somerset	Single Dissolution (CC)	Bridgwater College	1 September 2004

Source: Learning and Skills Council

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local education authorities are being considered for Building Schools for the Future funding in the present round; and which have asked for a city academy to be considered for their authority area. [206331]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: All local education authorities were considered for Building Schools for the Future funding in the recently completed round. We announced on 30 November the authorities chosen to join the programme in waves 2 and 3:

Wave 2

Birmingham
Hackney
Haringey
Islington
Kingston upon Hull
Lambeth
Liverpool
Middlesbrough
Nottingham
Tower Hamlet

Wave 3

Barnsley
Derbyshire
Durham
Kent
Luton
North Lincolnshire
Salford
Sandwell
Tameside
Westminster

Of these authorities, the following have so far submitted formal expressions of interest to the Department to have one or more academies in their authority area: Barnsley, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Kent, Lambeth, Lewisham, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Salford, Sandwell, Southwark and Westminster.

Bullying

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the extent of bullying in schools; and if he will make a statement. [203194]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Data on bullying is not collected centrally and there is no reliable basis for an estimate on the scale of the problem. However any level of bullying is too high and we are determined to help schools tackle the problem. Our guidance "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", the anti-bullying Charter and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying. In November 2003 the Department launched the anti-bullying Charter for schools, which almost 4,000 schools have already signed. It is accompanied by a summary of effective practice to help schools review and enhance their anti-bullying policies.

Although the DfES does not collect statistics on the incidence of bullying various voluntary sector organisations do. These are as follows:

ChildLine survey August 2004

In August 2004 ChildLine announced a 42 per cent. rise in the total number of children counselled by the charity about bullying.

Last year (April 2003 to March 2004) more than 31,000 children and young people spoke to a ChildLine counsellor about bullying.

Parents' concerns—Parentline Plus—National Helpline Report March 2004

21 per cent. of calls to Parentline Plus between April 2003 and March 2004 were from parents concerned about their children because of bullying.

Bullying in schools—ChildLine research 2003 (DfES funded)

Half of all primary school children surveyed and more than one in four secondary children said they had been bullied within the last year.

15 per cent. of primary school children and 12 per cent. of secondary school students said they had both bullied and been bullied in the last year.

Over half of primary (51 per cent.) and secondary school pupils (54 per cent.) thought that bullying was a "big problem" or "quite a problem" in their school.

Over 60 per cent. of pupils (primary and secondary) thought their school was "very good" or "quite good" at dealing with bullying. But some schools are perceived to be more effective than others, and secondary school pupils are less likely to give their school a glowing report: 36 per cent. of primary school pupils thought that their school was "very good" at dealing with bullying compared with just 12 per cent. of secondary school students.

Bullying and modern technology—NCH survey, April 2002

One in four children in the UK have been bullied or threatened via their mobile phone or PC. 16 per cent. of young people said they'd received bullying or threatening text messages, 7 per cent. had been harassed in internet chat-rooms and 4 per cent. via email.

Bullying in Britain, Young Voice, 2001

35 per cent. of boys and 26 per cent. of girls sampled in the Young Voice research admitted they had bullied other children. However different children have different views of what constitutes "bullying".

Of all the black and ethnic minority community children surveyed, a quarter were severely bullied compared with 13 per cent. of the "white" children.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on which television channels the school anti-bullying campaign advertisements sponsored by his Department are being shown; at what time of day they are transmitted; what the anticipated reach in numbers of children of school age is; what the anticipated reach in numbers of adults is; what the total cost is; and if he will make a statement. [205239]

Derek Twigg: The 60 second film produced as part of the Beat Bullying campaign is a public information "filler", not an advertisement. Fillers are public awareness messages, which must exclusively promote health, safety or welfare, and are run in donated airtime. As such, they are a unique and very cost effective route to a broadcast audience.

Currently 70 channels support fillers including:

All commercial terrestrial stations—ITV network, Channel 4, Five.

Major cable and satellite stations including a mix or targeted and ethnic channels.

"Money can't buy" transmissions on all BBC channels.

Stations usually show fillers during their promotional airtime and in any unsold advertising they may have. Fillers are also used to fill gaps in the schedule when programmes run short and to balance uneven network breaks

The Beat Bullying filler was released to broadcasters in December. They are unable to give advanced warning of when it will be shown. The first transmission report is due in February which will give the total number of transmissions and the estimated airtime value. However, the usage information we receive from the stations does not enable us to calculate the exact reach and demographic of the filler's audience.

The Beat Bullying filler cost £60,237.08 to produce and market to TV stations, but does not incur charges for broadcasting airtime.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205117]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This year the Department for the first time sent electronic and printed versions of Christmas cards. Printed cards are sent via the governmental inter-departmental service or the Royal Mail. No breakdown of the delivery methods is available which would enable an accurate assessment to be made of the postage costs.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and despatch of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in Government Accounting.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205118]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The costs of printing the Department's Christmas card this year was £1,510. The cost in 2003 was £2,820.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and despatch of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in "Government Accounting".

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205119]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Printed Christmas cards are distributed to Ministers and senior officials on request for their staff to prepare and send out. No central record is kept of the numbers sent out.

In 2003, some 13,500 cards were made available for issue. In 2004 the number was 3,000. In addition, in 2004 the Department for the first time sent electronic versions of Christmas cards via email. As at 17 December, 3,400 e-cards had been sent.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205192]

Derek Twigg: No central record is kept of the number of staff involved in preparing the Department's official Christmas cards.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205196]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: No central record is kept of the hours of staff time involved in preparing the Department's official Christmas cards.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205206]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department does not contribute financially to charities through its official Christmas card.

Each year the Department selects one or more charities who it wishes to endorse by referring to them on the card. This year's charity is the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from her Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205753]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department organises a large number of events for different target audiences and purposes each year, ranging from small scale workshops to introduce practitioners to new procedures or initiatives, to larger scale events to promote policy initiatives or present the bigger picture of the Department's activities to external partners and opinion formers.

Examples of these during the past year range from a series of small local events to disseminate good practice in meeting the needs of anti bullying behaviour, to informing Headteachers and stakeholders on the Department's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners in England.

Records of all such events sponsored by the Department are not held centrally and the information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201690]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department targets all ethnic communities through mainstream media, as it is the most cost effective way of reaching the largest possible audience

My Department has not booked publicity advertising specifically in Muslim newspapers in the past 12 months. It is only possible to provide information beyond this period at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [200819]

Derek Twigg: My Department remains committed to reducing energy usage in all its Department's buildings. A range of measures are in place and regularly reviewed and updated to ensure improved performance meets the requirements of the national policy "Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate". Energy costs for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04 are given in Table 1 below, along with the corresponding consumption data and average fuel prices: figures are given separately for electricity and heating fuels, as well as for the total energy and Table 2 shows floor area, consumption per sq metre.

Table 1: Energy costs, consumption and average prices

Electricity	
Spend 2002–03 (£)	805,654
Spend 2003–04 (£)	824,756
Percentage change in spend	2
Consumption 2002–03 (kWh)	18,844,508
Consumption 2003–04 (kWh)	19,101,147
Percentage change in consumption	1
Average price p/kWh 2002–03	4.28
Average price p/kWh 2003–04	4.32
Percentage change in p/kWh	1

The increase in spend is attributable to an increase in occupancy in DfES buildings and the corresponding rise in the use of all forms of IT equipment.

Fossil heating fuels	
Spend 2002–03 (£)	192,685
Spend 2003–04 (£)	162,553
Percentage change in spend	−16
Consumption 2002–03 (kWh)	12,111,996
Consumption 2003–04 (kWh)	10,526,997
Percentage change in consumption	−13
Average price p/kWh 2002–03	1.59
Average price p/kWh 2003–04	1.54
Percentage change in p/kWh	−3

The reduction in spend is due to the disposal of two DfES properties in the last year, (Vincent House in Darlington and East Lane House in Runcorn).

Total all fuels	
Spend 2002–03 (£)	998,339
Spend 2003–04 (£)	987,309
Percentage change in spend	−1
Consumption 2002–03 (kWh)	30,956,504

Total all fuels	
Consumption 2003–04 (kWh)	29,628,144
Percentage change in consumption	−4
Average price p/kWh 2002–03	3.22
Average price p/kWh 2003–04	3.33
Percentage change in p/kWh	3

The overall reduction in fuel costs is directly attributable to the disposal of two of the DfES HQ buildings.

Table 2: Floor area, consumption per sq metre

Floor area	
Floor area 2002–03 (th m^2)	97
Floor area 2003–04 (th m^2)	83
Percentage change in floor area	−15
Electricity/m2 2002–03 (kWh/m^2)	194
Electricity/m2 2003–04 (kWh/m^2)	231
Percentage change in electricity/m^2	19
Fossil fuel/m^2	125
Fossil fuel/m^2	127
Percentage change in fossil fuel/m^2	2
Total energy/m2 2002–03 (kWh/m^2)	319
Total energy/m2 2003–04 (kWh/m^2)	358
Percentage change in total energy/m^2	12

The reduction in floor area has been achieved as a result of property disposal. The increase in fossil fuels and total energy usage per square metre is attributed to the combination of an increase in IT equipment and usage, projects and refurbishments leading to open plan working and higher staff densities resulting in an increased pressure on the air conditioning in all buildings.

Doctorates

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many doctorates were awarded in each of the last three years, broken down by gender. [206326]

Dr. Howells: The latest available information is given in the table. Figures for 2003–04 will be published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in January 2005.

Doctorates obtained at UK HEIs

Gender:	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Male	8,545	8,300	8,720
Female	5,575	5,910	6,155
Total	14,115	14,210	14,875

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).
Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

Education Funding

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many opportunity bursaries were taken up at universities and further education (FE) colleges in each region in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05; how many grants were taken up by universities and FE colleges in each region in 2004; and how many (i) grants and (ii) opportunity bursaries were taken up at each university and FE college in the North East region in (A) 2001–02, (B) 2002–03, (C) 2003–04 and (D) 2004–05. [204618]

Dr. Howells: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Equine-based Courses

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many entrants there were to each *(a)* course, *(b)* college and *(c)* department for equine-based courses in each of the last five years. [204437]

Dr. Howells: Information on the number of enrolments at English HE institutions to study equine-based courses is not explicitly available from the Higher Education Statistics Agency student record prior to the academic year 2002/03. The available figures for 2002/03 are given in the table. Figures are not held centrally for each course or department.

HE entrants to equine-based courses at English HE institutions, 2002/03

Institution	*HE level*	*FE level*
Bournemouth University	10	0
Buckinghamshire College of HE	25	0
Chichester Institute of HE	5	0
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	0	0
Oxford Brookes University	15	0
Royal Agricultural College	25	0
University of Lincoln	15	0
University of Plymouth	15	0
University of Wolverhampton	25	0
Writtle College	5	40
Total	140	40

Note:
Figures are based upon a snapshot as at the 1 December and are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

The number of learners at each FE college is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Mark Haysom the Council's Chief Executive will write to the hon. Gentleman with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Ethnic Diversity

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans the Government have to increase ethnic diversity in higher education. [205770]

Dr. Howells: Minority ethnic groups are well represented in higher education. Recent research conducted by the Institute of Employment Studies found that they represent approximately 16 per cent. of the undergraduate population compared to 9 per cent. of the working population. However, the pattern of minority ethnic participation in undergraduate study is a complex one.

Government are supporting a range of activities and policies to promote equality of opportunity for those from all ethnic groups at various stages of their education: Aimhigher, a national outreach programme,

aims to raise the attainment levels and aspirations of young people from non-traditional and disadvantaged backgrounds; the Government's Aiming High Strategy is helping to raise the academic achievement of ethnic minority pupils in our schools; and university access plans submitted to the Office for Fair Access will, where appropriate, include details of activities to reach out to under-represented minority groups or subgroups.

In addition, the Government plans to lay a Bill before Parliament to establish a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights which will champion equality, diversity and human rights.

Field Trips

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what plans he has to encourage schools to undertake field trips; [205368]

(2) how many school field trips were sanctioned by each county council in each of the last five years; [205369]

(3) how many school field trips Norfolk county council funded in each of the last five years. [205370]

Derek Twigg: We are at the very early stages of exploring an Outdoor Learning Manifesto, along the lines of the Music Manifesto I championed earlier this year. We are doing this in conjunction with a wide range of partners such as field studies centres, voluntary and commercial outdoor learning organisations, NGQs, subject associations and other government departments.

We do not collect data on the amount of school field trips sanctioned and or funded by county councils.

GCSE Results

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 15-year-olds have achieved *(a)* five GCSEs at A*-C and *(b)* at least one GCSE A*-C in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [203525]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Graduate/Non-Graduate Incomes

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the average income of *(a)* a graduate and *(b)* a non-graduate over a 35-year career; and what estimate he has made of the average yield from (i) income tax and (ii) national insurance contributions of (A) a graduate and (B) a non-graduate over a 35-year career. [204932]

Dr. Howells: We estimate that the average gross lifetime earnings of a graduate with a first degree are just over £1 million, in real terms at 2001 prices, and that the average amount of lifetime income tax and national insurance paid is around £325,000. This is based on data from the Labour Force Survey, and relates to earnings between the ages of 21 and 59. Estimated average gross lifetime earnings for the working population as a whole are around £675 thousand, and the average amount of lifetime income tax and national insurance paid is around £175,000. We would expect the estimates for non-graduates to be lower than these figures. Figures are rounded to nearest £25,000.

Gymnasiums

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204365]

Derek Twigg: My Department is committed to providing staff with pro-active occupational health policies and uses health awareness programmes to promote and encourage healthy lifestyle options.

Staff who work in London and Sheffield have access to on site gyms. Both gyms are funded by the Civil Service Sports Council and are supported locally by staff using the facilities. The department's financial commitment to both gyms is nominal and covers space, cleaning, heating and lighting. Staff working in London also have access to the Civil Service Sports Council Recreation Centre in SW1 which is only five minutes from the department's headquarter offices.

In Sheffield, Runcorn and Darlington corporate discounts have been negotiated locally with both local authority and private fitness and leisure centres. My department does not subsidise individual members of staff using these facilities.

For staff that prefer alternative fitness programmes there are local arrangements in place during lunchtime and after work, subject to demand, for exercise classes such as yoga, aerobics and pilates. The department's financial commitment is again nominal and covers space, cleaning, heating and lighting.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what has been the cost in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [200832]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Very few cases brought against the Department have been founded solely on a claim for a breach of a Convention right. Convention rights will more often be relied on as part of other legal proceedings. We do not collect central records of all cases in which the Human Rights Act 1998 is relied on, nor of the cost to the Department of legal fees or compensation payments in cases which include this human rights element.

However the case of Douglas *v.* Secretary of State for Education and Skills was founded wholly on a claim for an alleged breach of Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms taken together with Article 2 of the First Protocol to the Convention. The Department successfully defended the claim and as a result no compensation was ordered. No order for costs was made so the Department bore its own costs which came to £20,586.

In addition the current case of Williamson *v.* Secretary of State for Education and Skills is concerned mainly with Article 9 of, and Article 2 of the first protocol to, the Convention. This case has not been concluded; it has been heard in the House of Lords but judgment has not been given.

It is not possible to apportion costs and compensation payments for those other cases in which a human rights claim was included without reviewing all cases brought against the Department since October 2000. This would give rise to disproportionate cost.

International Students (Visas)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received on *(a)* current and *(b)* proposed charges for visa extension applications made by international students. [205313]

Dr. Howells: In 2003, my Department received a number of representations from institutions and other organisations in the education sector on the introduction of charges for applications to extend leave to remain in the UK. Representations have also been received from institutions and students expressing concern regarding the proposed charges and the impact upon international students.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200618]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I have been asked to reply. During the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 the Department paid supplier invoices, on average, within 15 working days (unaudited figure). During this period, the Department paid 95.4 per cent. of undisputed invoices within 30 days or the agreed credit terms. Data on invoices remaining unpaid after 90 days is only available at disproportionate cost.

The Government are committed to improving the payment culture in the UK in order to create a fair and stable environment for business transactions. Government departments and their agencies should aim to pay all invoices not in dispute within 30 days or within the agreed contractual terms if otherwise specified. The Department supports this policy.

Literacy/Numeracy

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 775W, on literacy and numeracy, what percentage of *(a)* Key Stage 2 pupils and *(b)* Key Stage 3 pupils reached the required standards in (i) literacy, (ii) numeracy and (iii) literacy and numeracy in each year since 1997 in (A) Haltemprice and Howden and (B) England. [205441]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils achieving level 4 or above in English and mathematics for 1997–2003 are as follows:

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[1]	*2003*[1]
Haltemprice and Howden							
English	69	72	77	84	82	82	80
Mathematics	70	71	76	79	77	80	78
English and maths	—	—	—	—	—	76	71
England							
English	63	65	71	75	75	75	75
Mathematics	62	59	69	72	71	73	73
English and maths	—	—	—	—	—	66	66

[1] The English and mathematics combined information for Haltemprice and Howden are different to the other results as they are pupil-residency based and are only available from 2002 onwards as this is when PLASC data first became available to use.

Figures for 2004 by parliamentary constituency are not yet available, but will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

The percentage of Key Stage 3 pupils achieving level 5 or above in English and mathematics for 1997–2003 are as follows:

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[1]	*2003*[1]
Haltemprice and Howden							
English	65	68	67	69	67	70	77
Mathematics	69	65	70	74	72	72	73
English and maths	—	—	—	—	—	69	73
England							
English	57	65	64	64	65	67	69
Mathematics	60	59	62	65	66	67	71
English and maths	—	—	—	—	—	58	62

[1] The English and mathematics combined information for Haltemprice and Howden are different to the other results as they are pupil-residency based and are only available from 2002 onwards as this is when PLASC data first became available to use.

KS3 2004 figures will be made available soon after publication of the KS3 Attainment and Achievement Tables (March 2005).

Motoring Offences

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of drivers involved in fatal traffic accidents were *(a)* uninsured and *(b)* driving a car that did not have a valid MOT in each year since 1997, broken down by (i) gender and (ii) police authority region. [204720]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is not available.

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what reason she has adduced for the decline in Britain's place from eighth to eighteenth in the league table under the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment in respect of mathematics; [206799]

(2) what reason she has adduced for the decline in Britain's place from seventh to eleventh in the league table under the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment in respect of reading; [206800]

(3) what reason she has adduced for the decline in Britain's place from fourth to eleventh in the league table under the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment in respect of science. [206801]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: It is the view of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the body overseeing the running of PISA, that the data for the United Kingdom from the 2003 study cannot be reliably compared with other countries' scores or with UK PISA results from 2000. It would therefore not be appropriate to try to construct rankings for the UK against the advice of the OECD, still less to draw conclusions from doing so.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202554]

Derek Twigg: Departments aim to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their named day question on the named day and to endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but this Department makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

Information for named day questions for parliamentary sessions since 2001 is set out in the following table. Information for ordinary written questions and for sessions previous to 2001 could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Session	*Percentage of named day questions receiving a substantive answer on named day*
2001–02 20 June 2001 to 7 November 2002	54
2002–03 13 November 2002 to 20 November 2003	36
2003–04 26 November 2003 to 18 November 2004	30

Partnership for Schools

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the relationship is between his Department and Partnerships for Schools; and who the members of the board of Partnerships for Schools are. [204395]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Partnerships for Schools is an Executive NDPB of the DfES. It is a company limited by shares wholly owned by the Secretary of State and is co-financed and co-managed under a joint venture agreement between DfES and Partnerships UK.

Its board members are Peter Stanton-Ife and Stephen Crowne.

Prison Education

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what courses are available for prisoners wishing to pursue education above level three. [206704]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Offenders in custody can enrol with the Open University to pursue higher education courses.

Since 2002, we have provided £728,000 working with the Prisoners' Education Trust to support undergraduate students on Open University courses and to support the introduction of new "Openings" courses, which provide access to HE courses for those without suitable prior qualifications. The scheme is supporting 1,100 students in the current year.

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people are employed by the *(a)* Union Learning Fund, *(b)* Adult Learning Inspectorate, *(c)* Well Being Project, *(d)* National College of School Leadership, *(e)* Sector Skills Development Agency and *(f)* Implementation Review Unit; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body. [203745]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is listed as follows:

Union Learning Fund

The Union Learning Fund is a source of funding not a body or unit. It does not employ any staff.

Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)

(a) At 31 March 2004, the ALI employed 247.8 staff on a full time equivalent basis.

(b) The most recent published accounts for the ALI are for 2003–04, in which the running costs of the body were £27.81 million.

(c) We keep the ALI under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that its functions are still required and that the Inspectorate still provides the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Well-Being Project

The Well-Being Project Pilot in London is run by Worklife Support which is part of the Teacher Support Network and not the Department for Education and Skills.

National College for School Leadership (NCSL)

(a) At 6 December 2004, the NCSL employed 237.3 staff on a full-time equivalent basis.

(b) The most recent published accounts for the NCSL are for 2003–04, in which the running costs of the body were £13.1 million.

(c) A recent review has confirmed that the NCSL should remain in being.

Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

(a) At 31 March 2004 the SSDA employed 65 staff on a full-time equivalent basis

(b) The most recent published accounts for the SSDA are for the 2003–04 financial year, in which the administrative costs of the body were £4.93 million.

(c) We keep the SSDA under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that its functions are still required and that the SSDA still provides the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Implementation Review Unit (IRU)

(a) The IRU does not employ any staff. Secretariat services are provided by Department for Education and Skills staff and one LEA adviser.

(b) The IRU's running costs for the 2003–04 financial year were £348,967.

(c) We keep the IRU under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that its functions are still required and that the IRU still provides the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Pupil Mobility

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research he has carried out, and what conclusions he has reached, on the effect of in-year pupil mobility on educational achievement; and what rates of pupil mobility were experienced in 2003–04 in each local education authority-supported school in Newcastle upon Tyne. [204416]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department has not conducted any research into the particular effects of in-year pupil mobility on educational achievement.

However, some general research has been conducted into the nature and causes of pupil mobility in schools. A report published by the Department in 1999 concludes that high pupil mobility in schools is strongly associated with factors of social deprivation, family break-up, temporary accommodation and other rented housing occupied by poorer families moving around.

In terms of the link between pupil mobility and achievement, analysis of provisional 2004 GCSE data shows that pupils who joined their current secondary school at any time other than the start of a school year (in-year mobility), on average, achieved 27 GCSE points fewer at age 15 than other pupils with similar characteristics, including similar attainment at age 11. This approximately equates to achieving one grade lower in 4 or 5 subjects at GCSE.

With regard to the pupil mobility rates, the Department collects mobility indicators for primary schools. The mobility indicator is defined as the percentage of pupils eligible for Key Stage 2 assessment that are included in the value added calculation, who took both their Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests at the same school.

The mobility indicator for each local education authority-supported school in Newcastle upon Tyne in 2003/04 is given in the following table:

Primary school mobility indicators, 2003/04, Newcastle upon Tyne

Name of school	*Postcode*	*Mobility indicator (percentage)*
Beech Hill Primary School	NE5 2LW	7
Atkinson Road Primary School	NE4 8XT	68
Throckley Primary School	NE159JN	[redacted]
Newburn Manor Primary School	NE158PY	[redacted]
Walbottle Village Primary School	NE158JL	[redacted]
West Denton Primary School	NE51DN	[redacted]
Knop Law First School	NE51LH	[redacted]
Milecastle Primary School	NE51LH	[redacted]
Cheviot Primary School	NE54EB	75
Waverley Primary School	NE157QZ	[redacted]
Simonside Primary School	NE54LG	76
Fame Primary School	NE54AP	100
Lemington Riverside Primary School	NE158RR	[redacted]
Westerhope Primary School	NE51NE	
Byker Primary School	NE6 2AT	70
West Jesmond Primary School	NE2 3AJ	83
Benton Park Primary School	NE7 7SS	82
Hawthorn Primary School	NE4 6SB	52

Primary school mobility indicators, 2003/04, Newcastle upon Tyne

Name of school	*Postcode*	*Mobility indicator (percentage)*
Canning Street Primary School	NE4 SPA	63
Chillingham Road Primary School	NE6 5XL	72
Cragside Primary School	NE7 7EL	86
Delaval Community Primary School	NE156NR	72
Broadwood Primary School	NE157TB	67
Tyneview Primary School	NE6 3QP	72
North Fawdon Primary School	NE3 2SL	92
Hilton Primary School	NE53RN	70
Montagu Primary School	NE5 3HY	43
Mountfield Primary School	NE3 3AT	76
Ravenswood Primary School	NE6 5TU	91
South Benwell Primary School	NE4 SHE	89
Stocksfield Avenue Primary School	NE52DQ	81
Walkergate Primary School	NE6 4SD	86
Thomas Walling Primary School	NE5 3PL	70
Welbeck Primary School	NE6 2QL	81
Westgate Hill Primary School	NE4 6NY	70
West Walker Primary School	NE6 3XB	85
Wharrier Street Primary School	NE63EY	80
Wingrove Primary School	NE4 9HP	58
Wyndham Primary School	NE3 4QP	91
Kenton Bar Primary School	NE3 3YF	77
Kingston Park Primary School	NE3 2EL	79
Hotspur Primary School	NE6 SPA	84
Moorside Community Primary School	NE4 SAW	73
Christ Church C of E Primary School, Newcastle	NE2 1XA	75
St. Anthony's C of E Primary School	NE6 3SU	77
St. Charles' RC Primary School	NE3 SHE	93
St. Oswald's RC Primary School	NE3 5LE	94
St. Mark's RC Primary School	NE5 4BT	78
St. George's RC Primary School	NE156XX	78
St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School	NE158JL	89
St. John Vianney RC Primary School	NE51DN	93
St. Paul's C of E Primary School	NE4 7JU	88
English Martyrs' RC Primary School	NE5 2SA	85
Sacred Heart RC Primary School	NE4 9XZ	97
St. Bede's RC Primary School	NE157HS	76
St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School	NE3 3QR	97
St. Catherine's RC Primary School	NE21PS	72
St. Joseph's RC Primary School	NE156JB	86
St. Lawrence's RC Primary School	NE6 2JX	97
Our Lady and St. Anne's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School	NE4 6EB	85
St. Michael's RC Primary School	NE4 7RE	79
St. Teresa's Catholic Primary School	NE6 5HN	94
St. Vincent's RC Primary School	NE6 2TX	97
St. Alban's RC Primary School	NE6 4HQ	86
Chapel Park Middle School	NE5 1SH	0
Chapel House Middle School	NE51EL	0
Throckley Middle School	NE159DY	0
Gosforth Central Middle School	NE31UN	0
Gosforth West Middle School	NE3 1DY	0
Gosforth East Middle School	NE3 5JT	0
Trinity School	NE4 8XJ	[2]
Hadrian School	NE156PX	77
Thomas Bewick School	NE51DP	[2]

[1] No data was made available for those schools.
[2] Small schools with less than 11 pupils. In these cases results were not included.

Pupils' English

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what evidence the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census data provides of the capacity of pupils in primary schools to be taught through the medium of English. [204339]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* Data collected via the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) does not provide the requested evidence.

PLASC does collect individual pupil records which include information on whether the pupils' first

language is English. First language is defined as the language to which the child was initially exposed during early development.

PLASC does not collect data on the relative English language fluency of those pupils recorded as having a first language other than English.

National Curriculum Assessment and GCSE/GNVQ Attainment by Pupil Characteristics is now published by the DfES annually. This includes separate data on achievement by pupils whose first language is English and whose first language is other than English.

Qualifications

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school pupils passed *(a)* four GCSEs and *(b)* one GNVQ in each year since 1994. [200441]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is:

Number of 15-year-old pupils achieving[2]

	Number of 15-year-old pupils	*4 GCSEs*[1]	*1 GNVQ*[1]	*4GCSEs and 1 GNVQ*
2004	644,248	14,117	48,906	1,053
2003	622,122	11,971	81,587	1,328
2002	606,554	10,488	42,244	725
2001	603,318	9,904	20,094	363
2000	580,393	9,088	13,684	275
1999	580,972	9,375	10,747	181
1998	575,210	9,790	6,710	154
1997	586,766	9,988	—	—
1996	594,035	10,367	—	—
1995	578,197	10,422	—	—
1994	532,273	10,321	—	—

[1] The figures given are for pupils who achieved exactly four GCSEs—not four or more GCSEs. Similarly, for GNVQs, the figures refer to the number of pupils who achieved exactly 1 GNVQ.

[2] The information is derived from data collated for the Secondary School performance tables that are published annually.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the remit is of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's consultation on the proposed new framework for achievement; and how it differs from the remit of the Tomlinson Commission. [206154]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The remit of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's consultation on the proposed new framework for achievement is the reform of Vocational Qualifications and the establishment of a credit framework for adults in England by 2006.

The Working Group on 14–19 Reform, chaired by Mike Tomlinson, was remitted to make recommendations to strengthen the structure and content of full time vocational programmes; create appropriate assessment arrangements for this phase of education; ensure more young people remain in education and training beyond 16 and are better prepared for adult and working life.

We will be considering the Report carefully. Our intention is to make positive and detailed proposals in the form of a White Paper in the new year. We will ensure that this is compatible with the framework for achievement proposals.

School Finance

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* average primary formula spending share per pupil and *(b)* average secondary formula spending share per pupil was in each local education authority in 1996–97, listed in descending order of secondary formula allocations. [206899]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Changes to the funding system in 2003–04 and local authority boundary changes resulting from the local government reorganisation mean that figures comparable to the formula spending share are not available for 1996–97.

School Meals

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps she is taking to restrict the amounts of *(a)* salt, *(b)* fat and *(c)* sugar in school meals; [206816]

(2) what assessment she has made of the implications of introducing a national healthy school meals menu. [206817]

Derek Twigg: Government introduced regulations setting minimum school lunch nutritional standards in April 2001. Subject to meeting the standards, it is for local education authorities or, where the budget for lunches is delegated to them, a school's governing body to decide the ingredients to be used and dishes to be served.

£1.1 million is being provided by DfES, the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Department of Health and DEFRA to fund initiatives to improve school meals. We are:

revising the secondary school lunch standards to reduce pupils' salt, sugar and fats intake and increase their fruit and vegetable consumption;

evaluating primary school lunch standards to establish where revision is needed;

producing guidance for schools on procuring healthier meals;

developing school catering training.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204508]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department remains committed to managing sickness absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published report "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector".

I would refer the right hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the

average number of working days lost through sickness for each staff year and the number of staff years on which the calculation is based. The most recent report is for calendar year 2003 and was announced by Written Ministerial Statement on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, 1WS and copies placed in the Libraries of the House. Reports for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/conditions_of_service/caje/publications/index.asp#sickness.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203466]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office on 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 946W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203910]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203971]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204287]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204306]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: No special advisers from the Department for Education and Skills or its predecessor, the Department for Education and Employment, have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997.

Student Drop-outs

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the cost of students dropping out of their first degree courses in the latest year for which figures are available. [204660]

Dr. Howells: The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) teaching funding method provides funding for students who complete their course of study. Students who do not complete their course are not fundable. Figures for the public costs of student support for higher education students who do not complete their courses are not available: but student loans are, of course, repayable by them on the same terms as other students.

The latest data, for student starting courses in 2001–02, show that non-completion rates are somewhat lower than those starting courses in 1997–98.

Figures published in 2004 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) show that the UK as a whole has one of the lowest non-completion rates among OECD countries.

Student Finance

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expected future income stream to the Treasury from university tuition and top-up fees is in each of the next 15 years; and if he will make a statement. [204781]

Dr. Howells: University tuition fees are paid to higher education institutions (HEI), not the Treasury. That will continue to be the case when variable deferred fees are introduced. From 2006, either the student will pay their fees direct to the HEI or (for students opting to take out the new loan for fees) the Student Loans Company will pay the HEI on the student's behalf. Because of the nature of the variable scheme, the income generated by HEIs will vary considerably, depending on their pricing and marketing strategies and the take-up of places by potential students.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Government's actual expenditure on the interest subsidy on student loans was in the academic years *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05. [204931]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State for Education and Skills only has responsibility for student loans paid to higher education students domiciled in England and Wales and this answer provides data relating to those students.

The following table provides the expected future interest subsidy over the loan's life for each year's loan issues. This represents the anticipated whole resource cost of the loans advanced during the year in question. The table also gives the actual amount by which the Government subsidised the interest charged on student loans annually. This represents the resource consumed in the financial year in question of subsidising the whole outstanding loan book. Calculations are based on financial rather than academic years:

£ million

Financial year	*Future interest subsidy charge*	*Annual interest subsidy*
2001–02	773	376
2002–03	959	544
2003–04	600	427

Source:
DfES Resource Accounts

The Government's cost of capital rate changed from 6 per cent. to 3.5 per cent. on 1 April 2003, therefore, the earlier years are not comparable with later years. Actual figures for 2004–05 are not yet available.

Teachers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the resignation rate of teachers was in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by region; and what percentage of each region's teacher workforce each represents. [205378]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information is not collected in the format requested.

The latest information on teacher turnover and wastage is provided in the following table. Additional information on wastage rates are contained in the "School Workforce in England" volume 2003 edition, a copy of which has been placed in the House of Commons Library. It is also available at the following URL:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgatewav/DBA/OL/v000443/index.shtml

Teacher Flows

Turnover and wastage rates of qualified teachers by Government Office region—England

(percentages)

	Full-time		*Part-time*[1]		*Full-time and part-time*[1]
	Turnover rate[2]	*Wastage rate*[3]	*Turnover rate*[4]	*Wastage rate*[5]	*Wastage rate*[6]
Government Office region 2001/200 2[7]					
North East	15.3	7.9	35.7	27.1	7.0
North West	16.8	9.2	31.5	26.5	7.9
Yorkshire and The Humber	16.7	8.9	27.6	23.0	7.6
East Midlands	19.8	9.5	29.5	23.6	8.3
West Midlands	17.7	8.7	32.2	27.1	7.7
East of England	23.0	11.0	36.9	27.0	9.6
London	23.0	11.9	27.9	21.5	9.6
of which:					
inner London	25.1	13.6	27.2	22.0	10.2
outer London	21.9	11.0	28.2	21.3	9.4
South East	20.5	11.8	30.1	25.2	10.5
South West	17.5	10.4	31.3	26.3	9.2
England					
2000/01	18.0	9.9	34.1	28.5	9.1
2001/02[7]	19.2	10.1	31.1	25.1	8.8
2002/03[7]	17.9	10.0	30.2	24.9	8.9

[1] 10–20 per cent. of part-time teachers may not be included in the data.
[2] Full-time turnover is defined as all teachers in full-time service in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2001 who were not in full-time service in the same establishment on 31 March 2002. Turnover therefore includes wastage, transfers to other establishments within the maintained schools sector and teachers leaving to part-time service. Not all employers record all movements between schools within their employ so rates are underestimated.
[3] Full-time wastage is defined as all teachers in full-time service in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2001 who were not in full-time service anywhere in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2002. This includes teachers leaving to part-time service.
[4] Part-time turnover is defined as all teachers in part-time service in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2001 who were not in part-time service in the same establishment on 31 March 2002. Turnover therefore includes wastage, transfers to other establishments within the maintained schools sector and teachers leaving to full-time service. Not all employers record all movements between schools within their employ so rates are underestimated.
[5] Part-time wastage is defined as all teachers in part-time service in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2001 who were not in part-time service anywhere in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2002. This includes teachers leaving to full-time service.
[6] Full-time and part-time wastage is defined as all teachers in full-time or part-time service in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2001 who were not in full-time or part-time service anywhere in the English maintained schools sector on 31 March 2002. This does not include moves between full-time and part-time service.
[7] Provisional data.

Source:
Database of Teacher Records

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the retention rate in percentage terms was for registered trainee teachers after *(a)* one year of teaching, *(b)* two years of teaching and *(c)* five years of teaching in the latest year for which figures are available. [205389]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table gives the percentage of newly qualified teachers who entered full time and part-time regular service in 2001–02, 1999–00 and 1997–98 who remained in regular service in maintained sector schools at March 2003. This is the latest year for which figures are available.

Year of entry	*Percentage in service March 2003*
2001–02	90.7
1999–2000	80.3
1997–98	74.2

Source:
Database of Teachers' Records.

Information is provisional.

Teachers who have left service may be out of service temporarily or in service outside of the English maintained sector.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of the total number of teacher vacancies of longer than three months duration in *(a)* the primary sector, *(b)* the secondary sector and *(c)* further education. [205387]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information is not collected centrally.

General vacancy information for primary and secondary sectors is available from SFR 34/2004, a copy of which has been placed in the House of Commons Library. It is also available at the following URL: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsaateway/DB/SFR/s000493/index.shtml

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary school teachers left the profession before completing five years of teaching *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by subject, in (i) England, (ii) each region and (iii) each local education authority in the latest year for which figures are available. [205054]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* The following tables give the number of full-time and part-time newly qualified teachers who first entered regular service in maintained secondary schools in the financial year 1996–97, who were not in such service at March 2002 broken down by subject of initial teacher training and government office region of first entry. This is the latest year available by government office region.

National figures are also given for teachers who entered service in 1997–98 who had left service by March 2003 by subject. This is not available by government office region.

Information is not available at local education authority level.

Newly qualified teachers entering secondary service and then leaving service within the following 5 years by Government Office Region

	Maths	*English*	*Science*	*Modern Foreign Languages*	*Technology*	*History*
Year of entry 1996–97						
North East	20	30	30	20	20	10
North West	40	50	70	40	30	20
Yorkshire and the Number	30	40	40	30	30	10
East Midlands	20	30	30	30	10	10
West Midlands	30	40	50	40	20	20
East of England	30	80	70	70	40	20
London	70	100	80	60	50	30
South East	70	90	110	90	60	30
South West	30	40	50	40	30	20
England	340	500	510	400	270	170
Year of entry 1997–98						
England	300	550	490	380	130	160

	Geography	*Art*	*Music*	*Religious Education*	*Physical Education*	*Other/ unknown*	*Total*
Year of entry 1996–97							
North East	10	—	10	10	10	10	130
North West	10	10	10	20	10	20	300
Yorkshire and the Number	10	10	10	10	20	10	200
East Midlands	10	10	10	—	20	20	150
West Midlands	10	10	10	10	20	30	230
East of England	20	20	20	30	30	40	370
London	30	20	20	20	30	50	520
South East	40	40	20	20	50	50	610
South West	10	10	10	10	20	20	240
England	140	130	110	120	210	250	2,750
Year of entry 1997–98							
England	190	310	100	140	250	220	2,830

Notes:
1. Data are provisional.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
3. — zero or less than 5.
4. 10–20 per cent. of teachers may not be included in the data.
5. Teachers are counted for each subject of teacher training and therefore may appear more than once where they have more than one subject of qualification. Teachers appear only once in the overall totals however and therefore these figures are lower than the sum of the individual subjects.
6. There was a change in the categorisation of Art and Technology between the two years and the figures for these subjects are therefore not comparable.
7. Teachers who have left service may be out of service temporarily or in service outside of the English maintained secondary sector.

Source:
Database of Teachers' Records.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to move pension provisions for teachers employed by local authorities into line with those employed by the local education authority. [205548]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Teachers' Pension Scheme (England and Wales) covers all teachers employed by, or in, schools maintained by a local education authority as well as any teachers employed directly by a local authority. The Teachers' Pension Scheme is a group scheme and all scheme members have access to the same range of benefits.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the mean age at which teachers retired was *(a)* on the latest date for which figures are available and *(b)* in 1994; and what estimate he has made of the likely mean age at which teachers will retire in 2014. [205388]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The average age of retirement of teachers in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, whose last service was in the maintained sector in England in 2003–04, excluding those retiring on ill health grounds, was 59. This is the latest year for which figures are available. In 1993–94 the average age was 58. No estimate has been made of the likely mean age at which teachers will retire in 2014.

The following table gives the average age of teachers at retirement broken down by the type of retirement.

Year of retirement

	2003–04	*1993–94*
Age	61	62
Premature	57	56
Actuarially reduced	57	[1]—
Total	59	58

[1] Not applicable: Actuarially reduced pension benefits were introduced from 2000–01.

Note:

Information for 2003–04 is provisional.

Source:

Pensioner Statistical System

Travel Costs

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203773]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. Details on the cost of Ministers' domestic travel are not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

According to our records a special adviser accompanied the Secretary of State on the following overseas visits:

	Number of overseas visits	*Average cost for special adviser per visit (£)*
1997	4	381
1998	4	766
1999	0	—
2000	0	—
2001	0	—
2002	2	883
2003	2	446

Details on the cost of special advisers' domestic travel are not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Information on travel costs for officials is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Universities (Science)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action she is taking to maintain the level of provision of science-based courses at universities. [205689]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State wrote to the Higher Education Funding Councils for England (HEFCE) on 1 December seeking their advice on subjects or courses of national strategic, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the closure of science-based departments at UK universities. [205701]

Dr. Howells: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and strategic use of funds. The Government are nevertheless concerned to ensure that the UK has the right stock and flow of skilled scientists. The Science and Innovation Investment framework 2004–2014, published in July, set out a range of measures to address this.

More recently, the Secretary of State wrote to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) seeking their advice on subjects or courses of national strategic importance, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many science-based departments have closed in universities since 1997. [205704]

Dr. Howells: The information requested is not available. Universities are autonomous institutions, free to make decisions about courses and departments without consulting Government. The Department for Trade and Industry analysis for "The Science and Innovation Investment Framework" estimated that approximately 15 physics and 11 chemistry departments closed in the past 10 years.

University Admissions

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he expects to announce the conclusions of his review of benchmarks for university admissions based on *(a)* state schools and *(b)* socio-economic status; and when this review commenced. [204031]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 10 November when I said that I will look at the benchmarks to see if there is any way they can be improved or better understood. I have not announced a specific timescale for this work.

University Enrolments

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many full-time higher education students were enrolled at universities and colleges in England in each of the past 10 years. [205893]

Dr. Howells: The available information is given in the table.

Full-time enrolments at English institutions, 1993–94 to 2002–03

Academic year	*Postgraduates*	*Undergraduates*	*Total HE*
1993/94	93,035	755,750	848,785
1994/95	106,205	798,075	904,285
1995/96	111,060	834,905	945,965
1996/97	116,065	852,905	968,970
1997/98	118,015	876,600	994,615
1998/99	121,500	881,990	1,003,490
1999/00	125,815	877,470	1,003,280
2000/01	133,020	880,955	1,013,980
2001/02	143,130	900,265	1,043,395
2002/03	159,995	930,735	1,090,730

Note:
Figures are on a snapshot basis as at 1 December and as at the 1 November for FESR institutions. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency, Universities Statistical Record and the Further Education Statistical Record (FESR).

University Entry

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many UK citizens of *(a)* Asian, *(b)* black, *(c)* Chinese and *(d)* white background were admitted to universities in England in 2004. [205769]

Dr. Howells: The latest available information covers applicants accepted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to full-time undergraduate courses for entry in 2003. The figures are in the table. Figures for 2004 entry are due for release by UCAS in January.

UK domiciled applicants accepted onto full-time undergraduate courses at English institutions, 2003 entry

Ethnicity	*Accepted applicants*	*Percentage of known ethnicity*
White	202,842	80.0
Black Caribbean	3,627	1.4
Black African	7,548	3.0
Black Other	914	0.4
Indian	13,621	5.4
Pakistani	7,839	3.1
Bangladeshi	2,474	1.0
Chinese	2,906	1.1
Other Asian	3,492	1.4
Mixed	6,155	2.4
Other	2,107	0.8
Total Known	253,525	100.0
Not Known	21,458	—
Total	274,983	—

Source:
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

University Fees

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her latest estimate is of the number of universities expected to charge the maximum £3,000 fee in 2006; and if she will make a statement. [205703]

Dr. Howells: The Government does not have a particular expectation of the pattern of fee charging. The level of fees to charge, up to the maximum of £3,000, is for the universities themselves to decide, provided that they can satisfy the Office for Fair Access in respect of their access plans.

Vending Machines

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to encourage the sale of healthy foods by vending machines in schools. [205400]

Derek Twigg: School head teachers and governing bodies decide whether to install vending machines in schools, and if so, what products should be sold. However, we plan to extend our nutritional standards for school lunches to cover food consumed in schools throughout the day.

Across government we are taking forward a number of initiatives that focus on healthy vending machines in schools. The Department of Health's (DoH) strand of the joint DfES/DoH Food in Schools programme includes a pilot project on healthier vending. Information can be viewed on their website: http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FoodInSchools/fs/en.

The Food Standards Agency recently published a toolkit entitled "Vending Healthy Drinks". The guide provides information on healthy vending machines selling drinks such as milk, pure fruit juice and water. The guide can be viewed on the website: http://www.food.gov.uk/news/pressreleases/2004/oct/vendinghealthy.

Verwood Trinity School

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 780W, on Verwood Trinity School, whether her Department accepts liability for the £200,000 debt. [206330]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 20 December]:* No. This is a commitment taken on in respect of the school without agreement from the Department that it

would be funded. However, as indicated in the answer on 9 December, we will review the position on providing grant support towards the costs nearer the end of the financial year.

Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he is taking to improve the coherence and convergence of funding streams for vocational education within schools, further and higher education. [204498]

Dr. Howells: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as the planner and funder of all post-16 vocational learning, excluding higher education, is responsible for working towards coherence within the sector and my officials are ensuring the input of schools and higher education interests to the council's work. The Higher Education Funding Council and the LSC are also working together to reduce the burdens placed on further education colleges that deliver higher education and also looking at how they can support progression for students. Our response in the new year to the Tomlinson proposals will take forward our work to ensure better coherence in learning, particularly vocational provision, for young people.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204145]

Derek Twigg: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

There are currently 21 members of staff who have signed an opt-out agreement. The Department is committed to reducing the number of employees who are required to work in excess of 48 hours per week to an absolute minimum. Hours worked by staff in Ministerial Private Office are regularly reviewed.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Age Concern

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had with Age Concern representatives regarding pensions and benefits paid to the elderly living in the Greater London area. [206189]

Malcolm Wicks: We have regular discussion with Age Concern at a national level through their membership of the Partnerships against Poverty forum which brings together Government and non-government organisations to develop benefit take up strategies for pensioners. In addition, we have had local discussions with Age Concern in the Greater London area. Age Concern is also a member of a recently established joint visiting team with the local Pension Service and the Richmond Council.

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202442]

Maria Eagle: The Department is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all employees, regardless of their age. It has a policy not to tolerate unfair discrimination on the grounds of age.

The Department is however required to meet the Civil Service Management Code standards which set an upper age limit for retirement across the civil service of 65.

The Department actively encourages applications from all age groups when recruiting. It accepts applications from those aged between 16 and 64. The minimum retirement age for DWP is 60; the minimum age at which employees are eligible to retire and access their civil service pension. An individual can choose to retire anytime between age 60 and 65.

The Department reinforces its policy commitment on age discrimination by including age among the criteria which are monitored, to ensure that its policies and procedures do not have an unfair impact. A range of resources supports formal employee policies on age across the Department. Age forms a key strand of the "Diversity Toolkit", a learning and information resource developed by the Department. Other initiatives include staff networking groups, supported by an "Age Champion" from the Department's senior management team, which have been set up to identify issues related to age diversity.

The Department plays an active role in tackling age discrimination and promoting age diversity policies in the employment market through its work with the "Age Positive" campaign. It also has representation on the Executive Steering Group of the Employer's Forum on Age, a network of leading employers seeking to promote the benefits to business of attracting and retaining experienced employees, regardless of their age.

Apprenticeships

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young people in *(a)* Midlothian and *(b)* Scotland (i) have participated in apprenticeship schemes and (ii) undertook apprenticeships between 1990 and 1997. [204601]

Mrs. McGuire: I have been asked to reply.

Modern apprenticeships in Scotland are a matter for Scottish Ministers. The information is not available in the format requested. Figures for 1997 are available for Scotland as a whole; they are not broken down further

by geographical area. 5,038 individuals in Scotland undertook training within a modern apprenticeship in 1997.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners currently entitled to council tax benefit fail to claim *(a)* in total, *(b)* broken down by council tax band and *(c)* broken down by housing tenure; [206606]

(2) what is the total level of entitlement to council tax benefit among pensioners *(a)* in total, *(b)* broken down by council tax band and *(c)* broken down by housing tenure. [206607]

Mr. Pond: The latest available information is in "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take Up in 2001/2002", a copy of which is in the Library. Estimates by council tax band are not available.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of pension credit also receive council tax benefits. [206608]

Mr. Pond: The information is not currently available. Data on which other benefits are in payment to council tax benefit recipients is taken from an annual count. The most recent available such data is for May 2003, before pension credit was introduced. Further data will not be available until late next year.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to assist parents who are financially worse off as a result of the delay in migration of Child Support Agency cases from the old to the new system. [205923]

Mr. Pond: We have always made it clear that old scheme cases will not be transferred to the new scheme until we are sure that the new arrangements are working well. Money continues to flow under the old scheme to children. We believe it is better to ensure that this flow of money continues rather than put at risk these cases by bringing them across before we are sure that the new system is robust.

Dangerous Substances

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to update the 1991 Report on Major Hazard Aspects of the Transport of Dangerous Substances; and if he will make a statement. [206160]

Mr. Pond: We have no plans to update the 1991 Report on Major Hazard aspects of the Transport of Dangerous Substances.

Policy responsibility for the carriage of dangerous goods transferred to the Department for Transport in April 2004.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [202435]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the following table:

£ million

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Business-related refurbishment works (non modernisation programme)[1]	25.819	22. 932
Modernisation programme works[2]	274. 181	335.068
Total	300	358

[1] Business-related refurbishment works are ongoing, internal changes to buildings to meet developing business needs e.g. the removal of partition walls to accommodate organisational moves of staff.

[2] Modernisation programme works are part of a major programme funded by the Treasury to improve the way in which DWP services are delivered to the public. The physical surroundings of several of the businesses within DWP are being changed, including Jobcentre Plus, The Pensions Service and Debt Management Services. This spend is a combination of new acquisitions, major refurbishments to buildings already part of the estate, as well as the smaller, business-related refurbishment works costs. While the overall cost of the programme is known it is not possible to provide separate figures for refurbishment works.

Note:

Additionally, our private sector partners Land Securities Trillium are responsible for providing an ongoing maintenance programme for all buildings on the estate. DWP pays for this as part of the unitary charge for the serviced accommodation it receives at each building and it is not possible to provide separate costs for this.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [202441]

Maria Eagle: At August 2003, the latest date for which information is available, the department provided the following childcare facilities.

Nurseries:	
Total Nurseries:	15
Total Places	300
Total Parents subsidised:	350
Holiday Playschemes:	
Total Playschemes	45
Total Places	750
Total Parents Subsidised	600

There are no childcare vouchers in payment. Payments are made by a variety of methods including direct payment to childcare providers, formal Contracts or Service Level Agreements and in some cases direct payment to parents.

Financial accountability is mainly at local business unit level and so exact details of the overall costs incurred in providing assistance with childcare is not readily available centrally. Investment in each childcare facility is based on a business case which must demonstrate business viability and value for money. Indication suggests that costs per year range between £700,000 and £1 million. We are unable to determine exact costs of Childcare across the Department due to differing payroll systems inherited on creation of DWP.

The DWP Diversity and Equality Division are currently working on producing a Department wide Childcare Policy Framework for implementation in April 2005. This will allow Businesses within the

Department to support individuals with childcare commitments through direct subsidy payments to parents/guardians. There are no plans to close the current provision but by implementing a policy of direct payment subsidies for parents it allows the individual to make use of provision which best suits them and their child.

In addition there is work taking place on an underpinning childcare salary sacrifice scheme to support the Departmental Childcare Framework and provide a minimum option to all staff. The Salary Sacrifice Scheme is scheduled for April 2006 to accommodate changes to the Resource Management and Payroll systems which cannot currently accommodate this Inland Revenue initiative. On implementation eligible individuals will be able to benefit from Tax and National Insurance Savings on a sacrificed amount.

Departmental Pay

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times the appraisal system for each pay bargaining unit in his Department has been changed in the last five years; and how many staff are fully or partly employed in connection with pay negotiations in each pay bargaining unit, broken down by grade. [200345]

Maria Eagle: In June 2001 the Department for Work and Pensions was formed from the Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The department inherited seven different legacy appraisal systems. This was unsustainable given our desire for consistency and fairness throughout DWP. Staff continued to use their legacy appraisal system while a new DWP Performance and Development System (PDS) was developed. The new system was developed taking into account best practise within government and the private sector and the central rules regarding appraisals as set out in Chapter 6 of the Civil Service Management Code.

PDS was implemented for all DWP staff up to Grade 6 (below Senior Civil Service) from April 2003.

Of the Departments and Agencies who came together to form DWP only the former Employment Service (ES), part of DfEE, had changed its appraisal system within the last five years.

The following table shows the numbers and grades of staff in DWP employed in connection with pay negotiation in respect of pay negations for 2004. Only a small number of the staff identified in the table are extensively engaged in the pay negotiations. Most are responsible for specific areas of pay policy and feed in their expertise to the pay negotiations at the appropriate time.

Grade of staff	*Number of staff*
Grade 6/Band G	1
Grade 7/Band F	2
SEO/Band E	1
HEO/Band D	4
EO/Band C	3
AO/Band B	1

Departmental Policy

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is his Department's policy to implement the proposals in the recent cross-cutting interdepartmental review of contracting with the voluntary sector. [206421]

Mr. Pond: It is the Department for Work and Pension's policy to implement the proposals of the Cross Cutting Review on the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery that relate to departmental contracting with the voluntary sector. Action to implement the wider recommendations of the Review is lead by the Active Communities Unit in the Home Office.

The department follows the cross-Government Compact framework for guiding relationships with the Voluntary and Community Sector set up in 1998. The Cross Cutting Review identified a widespread failure to implement the Compact and its Codes, and recommended that all departments take action to ensure that it is mainstreamed into normal business. The department has appointed a senior Compact Champion and established a Compact Working Group that is actively developing a Compact Implementation Strategy, working closely with the Active Communities Unit.

The department will continue to respond constructively to all the proposals in the Cross Cutting Review, taking account of the department's wider obligations under the Chancellor's Efficiency Review.

As an example of its constructive response, the department volunteered to take forward recommendation 18 of the Cross Cutting Review, on behalf of other Government Departments. The aim is to reduce the level of bureaucracy involved in contracting between the Voluntary and Community Sector and Government Departments. A Lead Funder project has worked with three voluntary organisations—The Prince's Trust, NACRO and Project Full Employ—and sought to reduce bureaucracy through a method of "passporting" pre-contractual information and streamlining the monitoring of contracts post contract award. The pilots have had some success and identified opportunities for departments to become more aligned and consistent in the way they contract with this sector. The project will report back to the Home Office with a range of recommendations in March 2005. The project has established a dedicated website www.dwp.gov.uk/leadfunder where common information for each of the voluntary sector organisations is accessible to public sector funding bodies.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206494]

Maria Eagle: DWP occupies approximately 1,800 buildings. The total floor space occupied by DWP in those buildings is 2,648,773m2. We have no vacant properties.

Of the buildings we occupy 1,681 have been transferred (for value) to Land Securities Trillium under the terms of the PRIME PFI contract.

Disabilities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205798]

Maria Eagle: At 30 September 2004, 6,831 out of 137,330 staff employed by DWP had a declared disability.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of emails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206736]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

Email messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further email guidance is available on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf

This policy has not been reviewed in the past 12 months.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205797]

Maria Eagle: This Department published its first Race Equality Scheme "Equality, Opportunity and Independence for All", in May 2002. This publication was issued as a consultation document, and following staff and stakeholder feedback, a revised scheme "Realising Race Equality in the Department for Work and Pensions" was published in July 2003. The scheme lists our functions and policies in order of priority for any potential impact on race equality, and sets out our plans for consultation and monitoring in respect of employment and service delivery functions.

Details of both these schemes, and the first annual progress report, can be found on the DWP website at www.dwp.gov.uk.

Plans are currently in train for reviewing the scheme by May 2005, in line with the legislative requirement.

There are several ways in which we assess how our policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities.

Impact Assessment

We have recently worked with the Home Office, CRE and other Government Departments to produce an impact assessment tool. This tool has been used to assess several high profile policies, and is now in general use across the Department. Impact Assessment is a priority function in this Department.

Customer satisfaction surveys

All of the DWP agencies carry out these surveys, and all include questions on ethnicity. The 2004 survey carried out by Jobcentre Plus has been evaluated, and has shown that overall satisfaction levels of ethnic minorities are comparable to those of the white majority. 80 per cent. of black and 77 per cent. of Asian respondents were either fully or fairly satisfied with the services provided.

Research

A range of research has been commissioned to explore the question of ethnicity and barriers to take up of various benefits and services. These include:

Research into experiences of lone parents from ethnic minority communities.

Opportunities and barriers in employment and training for refugees.

Diversity in Disability.

Delivering benefits and services to BME older people.

Research into the languages used by the Department to determine whether these are appropriate for our changing customer base.

Copies of the research publications are available in the Library of the House. From the assessments made so far, action is being taken in response to the findings.

Consultation.

Ethnic minority outreach programmes are in place across the Department and feedback from customers involved in these help inform us whether our services are accessible to these groups. The Department has also set up the Ethnic Minority Working Party, with which we consult regularly on issues affecting ethnic minority groups. We also meet regularly with the Black and Minority Ethnic Elders Group, and the Ethnic Minority Forum, which comprises over 700 organisations, meets bi-annually.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library a copy of the calculations of the cost of paying full compensation to all affected members under the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS), which are referred to in the minutes of the meeting between his FAS team officials and occupational pensioners on 24 November at his Department. [206291]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have not made definitive estimates of the costs of providing assistance under the Financial Assistance Scheme. Definitive estimates will be made public once they are available. The full extent of losses can only be known once all potentially eligible schemes have been identified and information obtained on the individuals affected and the scale of their losses. Calculations made in advance of this data being available are inherently provisional. To release any such provisional calculations could be misleading. In accordance with Part 2, paragraph 11 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, I will not be releasing any calculations relating to incomplete research and analysis.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff in his Department have been employed to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205041]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the form requested.

The implementation of the Freedom of Information Act across DWP builds on existing processes for dealing with requests under the Open Government Code of Practice and the Data Protection Act. The Department's 250 or so data protection officers will take on additional responsibilities for Freedom of Information matters, supported by a network of 20 Freedom of Information focal points across key business units and a small central team of three staff.

Beyond those staff directly involved in the ongoing implementation and application of Freedom of Information within the Department, it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

DWP provides a huge amount of information on a daily basis to a wide range of customers about benefits, child support and back to work services. This will continue under the Freedom of Information regime where we expect the majority of written requests for information to be dealt with as now as part of normal business.

Identity Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the likely effects on benefit fraud, expressed as an annual percentage, of the introduction of identity cards. [203521]

Mr. Pond: We have not conducted a specific assessment that would allow us to make an estimate of the savings in benefit fraud from the introduction of a National Identity Card.

However, a study on identity fraud by the Cabinet Office, published in 2002, estimated that up to £50 million per year of benefit fraud was a result of identity fraud. This figure was derived from Regional Benefit Review data collected from Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support claims. The introduction of an Identity Card would have a significant impact by removing the bulk of this loss.

Furthermore, we anticipate that there would be an additional deterrent effect from the introduction of an Identity Card.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has undertaken of the likely impact of identity cards on benefit fraud; and if he will place copies of the written assessments that he has undertaken in the Library. [204056]

Mr. Pond: We have not conducted a specific assessment that would allow us to make an estimate of the savings in benefit fraud from the introduction of a national identity card.

However, a study on identity fraud by the Cabinet Office, published in 2002, estimated that up to £50 million per year of benefit fraud was a result of identity fraud. This figure was derived from Regional Benefit Review data collected from jobseeker's allowance and income support claims. This amount was used to inform the Home Office feasibility study into the impacts of the proposed identity card scheme. The introduction of an identity card would have a significant impact, by removing the bulk of this loss.

Furthermore, we anticipate that there would be an additional deterrent effect from the introduction of an ID card.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the cost of installing biometric card readers *(a)* in total and *(b)* as an average per facility for benefit offices in the UK; and what estimate he has made of the annual cost of maintenance for biometric card readers in these facilities. [206193]

Mr. Pond: We have conducted a high level assessment of the number of card readers that will be required by the Department. Our initial estimate is that in the region of 4,500 readers may be required. The Home Office currently estimate that the cost of a card reader would fall within the range of £250-£750 depending on their level of sophistication and performance. This would equate to a total of between £1,125,000 and £3,375,000.

Detailed work is still ongoing in relation to the overall maintenance costs. These costs will become clearer following further definition of the ID card scheme and DWP business requirements for interaction with the scheme are fully known.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has made to the Home Office regarding *(a)* the timescale and *(b)* the cost of introducing biometric card readers in benefit offices in the UK. [206194]

Mr. Pond: We are working closely with the Home Office to agree timescales for the introduction of biometric readers into benefit offices. Detailed work is still ongoing to establish the cost and types of readers that may be used.

Insulation Scheme

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young unemployed people have worked to improve the insulation of pensioners' homes under the new deal in each year since the scheme was introduced. [206408]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal database can identify how many people have attended each of the New Deal for Young People options; however information is not available on the specific work undertaken.

Jobcentres/Jobcentre Plus

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time taken in *(a)* Eston Jobcentre Plus and *(b)* Redcar Jobcentre Plus was for a jobseekers allowance claimant to go from the initial phone call to their appointment with the personal adviser and the financial adviser, in the most recent period for which figures are available. [206693]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Ms Baird, dated 21 December 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the average time taken in Eston Jobcentre Plus and Redcar Jobcentre Plus between a Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimant's initial phone call, to their appointment with the personal adviser and the financial adviser, in the most recent period for which figures are available. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Under Jobcentre Plus operations, a claim to JSA or Income Support usually starts with a telephone call to the Contact Centre. After obtaining initial details, Contact Centre staff call the customer back to obtain the necessary information to complete a claim to benefit. They also arrange an appointment for the customer to attend their local office to see both a Financial Assessor and a Personal Adviser.

The Contact Centre in Middlesbrough collects locally gathered information on a weekly basis. They have a target of 5 days to book an appointment from the initial point of contact.

The latest figures available are for week commencing 4 December 2004:

For Eston, 89.74 per cent. of all appointments were booked within 5 days of their initial contact (year to date 94.94 per cent)

For Redcar, 87.65 per cent. of all appointments were booked within 5 days of their initial contact (year to date 93.96 per cent)

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the sickness and absenteeism rate in jobcentres has been in each year since 1997. [206410]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in table 1 as follows.

Table 1—Sickness absence information for the former employment service and jobcentre plus for the calendar years 1999 to 2003

	Number of staff years	*Average working days absence per staff year*
1999	34,463	11.5
2000	35,229	11.8
2001	36,355	12.8
2002	36,715	13.5
2003	83,318	12.0

Notes:

1 The figures are taken from the annual analysis of sick absence undertaken by AON Limited on behalf of the Cabinet Office.

2. The information in table 1 covers the calendar years 1999 to 2003 relating to the former employment service and jobcentre plus, (created in 2002).

3. The AON reports do not distinguish between sick absence levels within employment service and jobcentre plus frontline offices and support functions including head office, and therefore represent figures for the Business as a whole.

4. The calculation used to derive these figures uses a staff-year adjustment, which provides a more reliable basis for average sick absence figures than a count of staff employed.

Minimum Income Guarantee

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the percentage take-up of the minimum income guarantee has been by people living in the Greater London area. [206188]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the form requested. At 3 October 2003 there were 214,155 households in the London Government Office Region (GOR), comprising 252,615 individuals, receiving the Minimum Income Guarantee. Information on the number of pension credit recipients in the London GOR at 31 October 2004 is given in the following table. Estimates of pension credit eligibility, based on 2002–03 Family Resources Survey data projected forward to 2004–05, are currently being revised consistent with Pre-Budget Report assumptions. The revised estimates will be available in January 2005.

Pension credit recipients in the London GOR, 31 October 2004

	London GOR
Households	279,060
Households in receipt of both guarantee and savings elements	97,935
Households in receipt of guarantee element only	141,825
Households in receipt of savings element only	39,295
Individual recipients	331,825

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.

3. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

4. Pension credit replaced Minimum Income Guarantee from 6 October 2003

New Deal

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he plans to take in response to the recent ECOTEC Report to his Department on Mentoring and Post-Employment Support of persons on New Deal. [204651]

Jane Kennedy: In October 2001 and February 2002, 16 mentoring and post-employment support pilots were introduced under the New Deal Next Phase. The

Mentoring Pilots were developed to meet those customers' needs that were not being met by mainstream mentoring, and to provide alternative methods of resolving barriers to employment.

ECOTEC Research and Consulting were commissioned by this Department to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot mentoring approaches, and the evaluative study was carried out in two phases during summer 2002 and spring 2004. An important aspect of the evaluation was to draw out lessons that were useful for mainstream mentoring providers.

The Mentoring Pilots ended in April 2004 and the full ECOTEC Evaluation report was published on 22 November 2004. Following on from the report, a mentoring good practice guide will be produced to disseminate the information contained in the Evaluation Report. District and Regional Contracting Teams will also be given the opportunity to contract for any of the different types of mentoring used during the pilot.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have started each of the New Deal for employment programmes in each *(a)* metropolitan authority and *(b)* county area in the North East region; how many of them have entered employment; how many have entered the New Deal schemes (i) once, (ii) twice, (iii) three times and (iv) three or more times; and how many entering the scheme entered employment in each case. [204428]

Mr. Pond: The New Deal has been successful in helping well over a million people into work.

Information on New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners is not available broken down by these geographical districts. Information for New Deal 50 plus, broken down by these geographical districts, is only available up to March 2003 and is for starts to the New Deal 50 plus employment credit, which can only be received once.

The available information is in the tables.

New Deal for Young People—starts, number of times on the programme and people gaining a job

	Tyne and Wear	*Cleveland*	*County Durham*	*Northumberland*
All people				
People starting	29,720	17,640	13,120	5,930
People gaining a job	18,380	10,880	8,810	3,960
Once				
People starting	20,880	12,620	9,480	4,300
People gaining a job	11,830	7,130	5,960	2,670
Twice				
People starting	6,390	3,660	2,660	1,160
People gaining a job	4,640	2,770	2,060	910
Three times				
People starting	1,930	1,150	790	370
People gaining a job	1,510	890	630	300
Three times or more				
People starting	2,440	1,370	980	470
People gaining a job	1,910	1,050	790	380

New Deal 25 plus—starts, number of times on the programme and people gaining a job

	Tyne and Wear	*Cleveland*	*County Durham*	*Northumberland*
All people				
People starting	19,150	7,390	7,390	3,570
People gaining a job	7,070	2,440	3,270	1,430
Once				
People starting	12,270	5,840	4,830	2,330
People gaining a job	4,890	2,030	2,300	1,000
Twice				
People starting	4,170	1,330	1,570	770
People gaining a job	1,400	340	670	300
Three times				
People starting	1,930	180	680	320
People gaining a job	580	50	220	100
Three times or more				
People starting	2,710	220	990	460
People gaining a job	780	60	300	130

New Deal for Lone Parents—starts, number of times on the programme and people gaining a job

	Tyne and Wear	Cleveland	County Durham	Northumberland
All people				
People starting	13,970	8,170	7,210	2,910
People gaining a job	8,240	4,790	4,490	1,640
Once				
People starting	7,080	3,820	3,180	1,400
People gaining a job	4,310	2,330	2,070	810
Twice				
People starting	3,950	2,480	1,980	790
People gaining a job	2,190	1,330	1,100	430
Three times				
People starting	1,880	1,190	1,190	470
People gaining a job	1,010	650	670	220
Three times or more				
People starting	2,940	1,870	2,050	730
People gaining a job	1,740	1,120	1,320	400

Starts to ND50 plus employment credit

Tyne and Wear	2,680
Cleveland	1,360
County Durham	1,410
Northumberland	650

Notes:
1. Data for New Deal for Young People is from January 1998 to September 2004.
2. Data for New Deal 25 plus is from July 1998 to September 2004.
3. Data for New Deal for Lone Parents is from October 1998 to September 2004.
4. Data for New Deal 50 plus are from April 2002 to March 2003. Data broken down by these geographical districts is not available after March 2003 for New Deal 50 plus.
5. Information for Tyne and Wear consists of the following parliamentary constituencies: Blaydon; Gateshead East and Washington West; Houghton and Washington East; Jarrow; Newcastle upon Tyne Central; Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend; Newcastle upon Tyne North; North Tyneside; South Shields; Sunderland North; Sunderland South; Tyne Bridge; Tynemouth.
6. Information for Cleveland consists of the following parliamentary constituencies: Hartlepool; Middlesbrough; Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland; Redcar; Stockton North; Stockton South.
7. Information for County Durham, including the Darlington unitary authority consists of the following parliamentary constituencies: Bishop Auckland; City of Durham; Darlington; Easington; North Durham; North West Durham; Sedgefield.
8. Information for Northumberland consists of the following parliamentary constituencies: Berwick-upon-Tweed; Blyth Valley; Hexham; Wansbeck
9. Geographical areas provided are as defined on the Parliament UK website.
10. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Officials (Working Hours)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48-hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204135]

Maria Eagle: The working time regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

We have no record of any current private office staff who has recorded such an opt-out.

The Department for Work and Pensions discourages staff from working excess hours as a matter of principle, as it runs contrary to the values which the Department holds on respecting people, and reflects its concerns as a reasonable employer for employees' work/life balance. All timesheets are locally checked on a monthly basis with responsibility devolved to individual line managers to monitor the situation.

Pension Credit

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the projected expenditure on pension credit is

for the present and succeeding three years on the presently announced uprating scheme, broken down by guarantee and savings components of pension credit. [204616]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the following table.

£ million—nominal terms

Pension credit	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Guarantee credit	5,133	5,465	5,979	6,610
Savings credit	989	1,0991	1,203	1,348
Total	6,122	6,564	7,182	7,958

Notes:

1. Figures are based on the latest forecasts, published in the Pre Budget Report on 2 December 2004.

2. Benefit Expenditure Tables in relation to the Pre Budget Report are published on the internet at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp

3. Figures are rounded to the nearest million.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of existing pensioners he estimates will be eligible for pension credit at some point during the remainder of their lives. [206409]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available. Estimates of pension credit eligibility, based on 2002–03 Family Resources Survey data projected forward to 2004–05, are currently being revised consistent with pre-Budget report assumptions. The revised estimates will be available next year.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensionshow many *(a)* male and *(b)* female pensioners claiming pension credit have seen their weekly income rise by (i) £0 to £10, (ii) £10 to £20, (iii) £20 to £30, (iv) £30 to £40 and (v) £40 to £50. [206708]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 October there were 1,969,985 households in Great Britain which had gained as a result of Pension Credit. In 1,309,425 cases the claimant was female and in 660,565 cases the claimant was male. The average weekly gain for these households was £16.91. It is not possible to provide more detailed information, in the form requested, about the amount by which households have gained.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of Pension Credit. Data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should available in January 2005.

3. Pension Credit replaced Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) from 6 October 2003.

4. Households gaining are defined as all those receiving the savings element of Pension Credit plus those receiving the guarantee element only who were not previously receiving MIG and whose 60th birthday was before 6 October 2003.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the distribution of *(a)* male and *(b)* female pensioners claiming pension credit is by age. [206709]

Malcolm Wicks: The available information is given in the following table.

Households in receipt of pension credit by age and gender of claimant, 31 October 2004

	All households	*Households with female claimant*	*Households with male claimant*
All	*2,633,550*	*1,678,230*	*955,320*
60–64	365,770	164,015	201,755
65–69	416,030	217,285	198,750
70–74	422,630	256,660	165,975
75–79	462,510	306,485	156,020
80–84	485,670	348,710	136,960
85–89	279,515	216,510	63,010
90+	201,425	168,570	32,850

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of Pension Credit. Data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be available in January 2005.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the estimated average amount not being claimed by *(a)* male and *(b)* female pensioners not claiming pension credit but who are entitled to it is; and what the average figure is broken down by age. [206710]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the form requested. Latest estimates of the average amount of Minimum Income Guarantee unclaimed by male and female pensioners can be found in the Department's report "Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-Up in 2001–2002", which is available in the Library. Estimates for 2002–2003 are expected to be released in January. Estimates of take-up in 2003–2004 will cover the first six months of Pension Credit and are expected to be released in late 2005.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the estimated number of *(a)* male and *(b)* female pensioners eligible to claim pension credit is; and what percentage of these are claiming. [206711]

Malcolm Wicks: Estimates of pension credit eligibility, based on 2002–03 Family Resources Survey data projected forward to 2004–05, are currently being revised consistent with pre-Budget report assumptions. The revised estimates will be available in January 2005. At 31 October, 1,073,170 men and 2,125,870 women in Great Britain were in receipt of pension credit, either as individuals or as part of a couple.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

2. Figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. Data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be available in January 2005.

3. The individual recipients of pension credit may include a small number of partners under age 60.

Pension Protection Fund

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the public sector pension schemes which *(a)* will be expected to pay a levy towards the Pension Protection Fund and *(b)* will not be expected to pay the levy. [206628]

Malcolm Wicks: Broadly speaking the Pension Protection Fund will protect members of public sector defined benefit schemes and the defined benefit elements of hybrid schemes that are not covered by Crown Guarantee.

We currently do not have a list of schemes that will be paying the Pension Protection Fund levies. However, the types of schemes who will and will not be expected to pay the levies will be set out in regulations. We anticipate that schemes exempt from the Pension Protection Fund protection and levy payments will be similar to those currently exempt from the minimum funding requirement.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to ensure that, when the Pension Protection Fund begins in April 2005, it will retrospectively include pension funds which have failed since the passing of the Pensions Act 1977; and if he will make a statement. [206235]

Malcolm Wicks: In May the Government announced the introduction of the Financial Assistance Scheme. The FAS will offer help to people who have lost out on their defined benefit pension due to their pension scheme winding up underfunded as their employer has been unable to make up the deficit.

Schemes that commenced winding up from 1 January 1997 will potentially be eligible for the FAS, subject to the other entry rules. Schemes starting to wind up right through to the introduction of the Pension Protection Fund will also be potentially eligible.

The Pension Protection Fund compensation will apply to the future and will not be retrospective. To qualify for entry to the Pension Protection Fund a qualifying insolvency event must occur after the introduction of the Pension Protection Fund, and the scheme must not have commenced wind up before then.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to include within the Pension Protection Fund, pension funds which have been affected short of insolvency, with particular reference to those affected by compromise agreements; and if he will make a statement. [206236]

Malcolm Wicks: The entry rules for the PPF are clear: an eligible scheme must not have commenced wind-up prior to the introduction of the PPF and their sponsoring employer must have a qualifying insolvency event after that date. In addition, if a scheme compromises their section 75 debt below the PPF level of compensation then the scheme will be ineligible for PPF assistance (unless the compromise was part of a scheme of arrangement or within a PPF assessment period).

Pensions

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of how many people living in England and Wales are in a private pension scheme. [206191]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people currently contributing to a private pension scheme in England is 12.5 million. The number of people currently contributing to a private pension scheme in Wales is 650,000.

Notes:

1. Those people "contributing" are members of a private pension scheme and either themselves or their employer are currently contributing to the scheme.

2. All figures are estimates and are taken from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). 2003–04 is the latest year for which data is available.

3. Private pension refers to either an occupational pension or personal pension.

4. Stakeholder pensions are included as personal pensions in the estimates.

5. The figures include those contributing to either an occupational pension or a personal pension. Where individuals contribute to both an occupational and a personal pension scheme they have been counted only once.

Source:

Family Resources Survey 2003–04.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the median income of *(a)* a single pensioner and *(b)* a pensioner couple in (i) gross and (ii) net terms was on the latest date for which figures are available, broken down by (A) income from state benefits, (B) income from occupational pensions, eEarnings and (E) other income. [206388]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is in the following tables:

Table A: The median Net and Gross incomes of all single pensioners and pensioner couples:

	Singles	*Couples*
Net income (AHC)	122	242
Gross income	168	291

Table B: The median incomes of all single pensioners and pensioner couples from different sources:

	Singles	*Couples*
State benefits	108	155
Occupational pension	8	54
Earnings	0	0
Investment income	0	3
Personal pension income	0	0

As many pensioners are not in receipt of these different sources of income, the median value is often zero. The total median income can not be broken down by income sources so that the components sum to the total.

The following table provides the median incomes from different sources for those pensioners in receipt.

Table C: The median incomes of all single pensioners and pensioner couples from different sources for those in receipt:

	Singles	*Couples*
State benefits	108	158
Occupational pension	55	107
Earnings	128	174
Investment income	2	8
Personal pension income	26	37

Notes:

1. Source Table A, B and C: The Pensioners' Incomes Series 2002–03 which is based on data from the Family Resources Survey.
2. Incomes are presented as pounds per week. Figures for incomes are given in 2002–03 prices and rounded to the nearest pound.
3. The Pensioners' Incomes Series analysis is for Pensioner Units, which are either:

Single pensioners (i.e. people over state pension age) or pensioner couples (i.e. married or cohabiting pensioners where the man is over state pension age.)

4. AHC stands for "after housing costs".
5. State benefits are taken as the sum of incomes from the state pension, income related benefits and disability benefits.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people he estimates are neither making a private pension contribution nor contribution to a state second pension, broken down by numbers of *(a)* self-employed people, *(b)* employees earning less than the lower earnings limit, *(c)* unemployed people and *(d)* non-contributors. [206420]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave on 6 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 426W.

Poverty (Northern Ireland)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when poverty statistics prepared by his Department last included the relevant information for Northern Ireland. [206557]

Mr. Pond: Information for Northern Ireland was last included in "Households Below Average Income—An analysis of the income distribution for 1994–95 to 2002–03" (HBAI) published in March 2004.

Copies are available in the Library.

Public Sector Pensions

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether occupational pensions for public sector workers, including guaranteed minimum pensions, built up before 6 April 1988, will have all the increases needed to keep up with inflation added directly to pensioners' additional state pension. [206597]

Malcolm Wicks: Occupational pension schemes which "contracted out" their members from the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS) up to April 1997 are required to pay those members a guaranteed minimum pension (GMP) once state pension age is reached. For GMPs accrued before 6 April 1988, there is no requirement for the occupational pension scheme to index the GMP to protect its value against inflation. Such protection is generally provided through SERPS. However, in certain cases, for example where state pension is frozen for an overseas pensioner, inflation proofing will not be provided. In such cases, public service pension schemes pay indexation increases on the whole occupational pension under scheme rules, even though this is not required by the contracting-out legislation.

Return to Work

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many previously long-term sick people have returned to work during the last 12 months. [206187]

Maria Eagle: This information is not available, however based on incapacity benefits administration data and the "Destination of Benefit Leavers Summary Report" published in February 2004, it is estimated that approximately 300,000 people leave incapacity benefits for work in each year.

A copy of the report is available in the Library.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on recent action by Jobcentre Plus to enhance incentives to return to work after receipt of benefits. [204654]

Mr. Pond: We recognise that people on benefits face a variety of barriers on returning to work and have already introduced a range of measures designed to help people overcome them.

On the 25 October 2004, we introduced an improved job grant for customers receiving jobseekers allowance aged 25 and over, and all lone parents and people of any age receiving income support or an incapacity benefit who are moving into full time work.

For lone parents the job grant replaces the lone parent's benefit run-on. For the first time access has also been extended to partners of eligible benefit recipients who take up work of 24 hours a week or more which takes the household off benefit.

The improvements to the job grant include an increase to £250 in the amount payable to those with children with other customers receiving £100. In addition, the qualifying period of benefit receipt has been reduced from 52 weeks to 26 weeks.

Job grant can be paid in addition to other work incentives providing the qualifying conditions are met. housing benefit and council tax benefit extended payments, mortgage interest run-on, the adviser discretion fund, and tax credits, are all designed to encourage customers by providing a smooth transition from benefits into work.

In addition we are piloting other initiatives in particular areas, for example the lone parent in work credit of 40 a week for the first 52 weeks in full time work was extended to a further nine jobcentre plus districts from 25 October.

Senior Women

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205799]

Maria Eagle: On 30 September 2004 there were 81 women out of 240 in the Senior Civil Service Grades within DWP.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether he has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in his Department since its implementation; [201343]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in his Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; and when each appeal was lodged. [201370]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the former Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers since May 1997. [203443]

Maria Eagle: Special Advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203491]

Maria Eagle: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Specific information is only available for the current special advisers who have been in position since September 2002. In this time departmental special advisers have not made any speeches in their official capacity.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204300]

Maria Eagle: From time to time Special Advisers will write to external stakeholders in an official capacity.

All Special Advisers contacts with external bodies and organisations are undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay-grade. [206512]

Maria Eagle: There are two special advisers.

One at special adviser pay band 2.

One at special adviser pay band 3.

Travel Costs

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203781]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. [Details on the cost of Ministers' domestic travel is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.] Travel costs for advisors who accompany their ministers overseas is included in the annual list on Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers. Other travel costs for advisors can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The available information for officials is in tables. DWP was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Travel expenditure information is not available for the former DfEE prior to March 2000, therefore expenditure figures up to and including 31 March 2000 are for the former DSS only. All travel complied with the requirements of the Civil Service Management Code.

Travel costs[1] from 1997–98 to 2000–01 for the DSS and its Agencies

£

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01
Benefits Agency[2]	18,968,615	18,692,979	20,803,862	18,382,607
Contributions Agency[3]	2,420,422	2,889,523	—	—
Child Support Agency	2,380,132	2,244,467	3,114,557	3,841,188
War Pensions Agency	275,967	348,711	416,182	445,401
HQ	1,535,194	2,423,911	2,939,166	3,462,278
Independent Statutory Bodies	862,751	828,137	1,890,467	1,876,481
Employment Services	—	—	—	2,613,873
Total	26,443,081	27,427,728	29,164,243	30,621,828

[1] Travel costs include vehicle rental, UK travel, foreign travel and official vehicle costs.

[2] BA costs included benefit offices, pensions, disability and carers directorate and DSS corporate centre.

[3] Contributions Agency transferred to Inland Revenue in 1999.

Travel costs[1] from 2001–02 to 2003–04 for DWP

£

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Benefits Agency[2]	14,311,031	—	—
Employment Services	2,730,854	—	—
JobCentre Plus	—	6,657,293	6,348,361
Pensions Service	—	5,669,528	10,001,472
Child Support Agency	3,026,276	9,307,901	5,769,218
Disability and Carers Directorate	—	1,563,153	1,305,638
War Pensions Agency	385,999	—	—
Independent Statuary Bodies	542,783	—	—
Appeals Service	—	670,736	797,560
Corporate and Shared Services	13,434,816	11,213,697	12,308,030
Total	34,431,759	35,082,308	36,530,279

[1] Travel costs include vehicle rental, UK travel, foreign travel and official vehicle costs.
[2] BA costs included benefit offices, pensions, disability and carers directorate and DSS corporate centre.

Winter Fuel Payment

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people eligible for a 2004–05 winter fuel payment needed to submit a claim to receive it; and how many of those have claimed, broken down by region. [206888]

Malcolm Wicks: We estimate that approximately 700,000 individuals in Great Britain reached age 60 in the qualifying period for the 2004–5 Winter Fuel Payment. About half of these will be paid automatically but others, who are not in receipt of certain benefits, will need to make a claim.

At the 10 December 2004 there have been 314,517 claim forms received. We are not currently able to give a reliable regional breakdown.

Those eligible have until 30 March to make a claim and it is up to them whether they do so. We publicise the availability and eligibility for the payments through out the claim period.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate how many single *(a)* women and *(b)* men in Scotland will reach the age of 60 years after the qualifying week for winter fuel payment eligibility but before 25 December. [206889]

Malcolm Wicks: It is estimated that around 2,000 single women and 2,000 single men in Scotland will reach the age of 60 after the qualifying week but before 25 December.

York Pension Centre

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobs were lost with the closure of the York Pension Centre at Monks Cross. [205468]

Maria Eagle: When the closure of York Pension Centre was announced there were 317 people affected. Since that date 112 people have found alternative employment. The remaining 205 are currently considering deployment on Financial Assistance Scheme in the former Pension Centre, voluntary early release or redeployment into surrounding DWP businesses.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobs he expects to be created within the administrative unit for the Financial Assistance Scheme to be housed within the former York Pension Centre at Monks Cross. [205469]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of jobs required is still being assessed.